"Labour Monthly" Conference (see opposite Contents)

THE

LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 16 February, 1934 Number 2

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

THE NATIONAL MARCH AND CONGRESS

THE POWDER MAGAZINE IN THE FAR EAST

Published at

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The Labour Monthly

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1934: *Subscription Rates*
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British Isles:

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad:

One year 8/- or $2.00 Six months 4/- or $1.00

American Subscription Representative :—Philip Novick, 270 Broadway, Suite 1401, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

The Labour Monthly is also obtainable wholesale from Workers' Bookshop, 16 King St., Covent Garden, W.C.2.

Advertisement Rates : £5 os. od. per cover page and pro rata. £4 os. od. per text page and pro rata (⅛th page minimum).

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The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York, N.Y., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

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OF FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

(ADMISSION FREE)

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4th, 1934

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1

3 p.m.—6.30 p.m.

Opener of Discussion: R. PAGE ARNOT

The Agenda will include:

(a) **The Rôle of the "Labour Monthly" in the Working-Class Movement.**
(b) **Problems of Extension of Work.**
(c) **Finance.**
(d) **Future Organisation of Work.**

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THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

VOLUME 16 FEBRUARY, 1934 NUMBER 2

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

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OUR CIRCULATION IS RISING

Five months ago we started our appeal for support for the LABOUR MONTHLY and even yet we are not out of the wood.

What are the trend of events and what rôle falls to the LABOUR MONTHLY *to play in them?*

With the more and more open breakdown of the whole machinery of the present system and its influence in every walk of life, the professors of orthodoxy, the paid and unpaid supporters of the system, are twisting and turning, are incontinently dropping their old garments and shamelessly donning the new—however discordant to the old in shape or size or colour they may be.

"Back to Homespun"; "Let British goods have only British Consumers"; "Produce at Home no matter how high the Cost"; blares out the chief trombone of the capitalist court orchestra, Mr. J. Maynard Keynes, who was but yesterday one of the chief advocates of limitless capitalist development.

Capitalism in full blast, to save itself from the rising tide of the revolutionary movement, is out to take what measures it can to shore up its system no matter where they lead—to the Dark Ages of domestic production with its endless drudgery and toil, to Fascism, to a new World War.

The Revolutionary Movement—with the Soviet Union as its vanguard showing the only way forward of limitless economic, scientific and cultural advance—more than ever before needs all the channels of publicity, all the advance posts, which it has set up in what is still the enemies' country, at once to counter the panic-stricken fury and break up and expose this motley mob of the last despairing crew of the decaying régime of capitalism, and at the same time to take part in the organisation of the working class for their overthrow.

The LABOUR MONTHLY *is one of these channels of publicity which, in spite of critical days in the past has held on and has been one of the vital instruments for the development of the revolutionary movement in Britain. For over twelve years it has been able to play its rôle in promoting the understanding of revolutionary Marxism in the working class movement.*

See that to-day it is not submerged. For it is just to-day when opportunities are increasing tenfold that there is an enormous importance in holding fast to every outpost in order to lay bare the mad death writhings of capitalism.

The increase in these opportunities is proved a fact. CIRCULATION IS RISING. *So much is to the good.*

BUT we still have that debt to meet (£300) and our monthly deficit, though diminished by the new guarantors, is yet to be wiped out.

We appeal to you who already know the value of the MONTHLY *to send us a donation, to join the list of guarantors in order that the* MONTHLY *can survive and realise all its opportunities.*

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The National March and Congress—The New United Front—The Fight against Fascism—What is Fascism?—Britain, America and Germany—Parallel Economic Policy—State Capitalist Experiments—Caricatures of Planning—Profits versus Wages—Permanent Mass Unemployment—The Meaning of the Unemployment Bill—Replacing Democratic Forms—Dividing the Proletariat—The New Serf Class—The Old "Aristocracy" of Labour and the New—The Urgency of the United Front—The Illusion of "Impotence"—The Power of United Struggle—The Practical Policy—The Crisis and Revolution

THE first large-scale nation-wide attempt at united front action since the beginning of the united front campaign a year ago is the National March and Congress to be held this month. The importance of this initiative at the present moment requires no emphasis. Since the victory of Fascism in Germany last year, the centre of the fight against the advance of Fascism, in those countries where the Fascist dictatorship is not yet established, is transferred to Britain and the United States. In the United States this fight is expressed in the fight against the Roosevelt dictatorship and the National Recovery Act, with its slave codes, forced labour camps and military preparations. In Britain this fight is expressed in the fight against the National Government, with its wholesale offensive against the working class and legislative and administrative preparations of fascist conditions. The centre of this issue to-day is the Unemployment Bill, which is the most complete expression of the new tendencies of capitalism—the combined attack against the unemployed and employed workers, the supersession of democratic forms, the most far-reaching and systematic code of enslavement of the entire working class since the New Poor Law of 1834, and open administrative preparation for the coming war.

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THE fight against this Bill is the centre of the fight to-day in Britain against fascism and against war. The response of the working class to this offensive will be of decisive importance for the next stage of development. The National Government and the central Labour Party and trade union leadership in unison are putting forth all their efforts to stifle working-class resistance, are throwing out their threats and their bans against working-class action, against the united working-class front. Nevertheless, the gravity of the issue is recognised widely through the lower organs, and even among a part of the official elements, of the trade union, Labour and Co-operative movements, as is shown by the response to the call for the united fight. The broadest front of working-class leadership since the post-General-Strike period of disorganisation of the working-class ranks, including trade union executive leaders, Labour Members of Parliament, the Independent Labour Party, the Communist Party and the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, have taken the responsibility, in the face of bans and threats, to combine forces for the call to the March and Congress. *This is only the beginning of the new front that requires to be built up. The responsibility of leadership that has hereby been undertaken by these elements requires to be carried through without weakening. This Congress must be the starting point of a new stage of the class struggle in Britain.*

WHAT is the significance of the Unemployed Bill? Let us first see it in relation to the whole development of the National Government, and of capitalism in the present period. The National Government, according to the statements of its leadership, is trying to perform the same rôle in Britain as Fascism is performing in Germany.

> The secret of the success of dictatorships is that they have managed somehow or other to make the soul of a nation alive. We may be shocked at what they are doing, but they have certainly awakened something in the hearts of their people which has given them a new vision and a new energy to pursue national affairs.

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> In this country the three parties in co-operation are doing that, and our task must be to get the young men with imagination, hope and vision behind us.
>
> (J. R. MacDonald, at the National Labour Committee Luncheon, November 6, 1933.)

From this we learn that the Prime Minister considers the rôle of the National Government to correspond to that of Fascism in Germany; and he even tries to use the same smooth, shameless "idealist" language to cover the ugly realities of decaying capitalist brutality and policies of starvation and war—"to make the soul of a nation alive," "a new vision and a new energy to pursue national affairs," "the young men with imagination, hope and vision" (à *la* Goering), &c.

NOW what is Fascism trying to do? Or, more broadly, what is Capitalism trying to do, through the direct Fascist forms in Germany, and through the forms of the Roosevelt dictatorship in the United States and of the National Government in Britain? Capitalism is trying to save its skin, to prolong its life by any and every means, after the world economic crisis and the collapse of stabilisation has laid bare to all its condemnation and its failure. For this purpose it needs extreme violence against the proletariat, its destined heir, and desperate emergency economic measures, contradicting all its former principles, to keep its economy going somehow. The extent of the violence against the proletariat depends on the strength of the proletarian forces. Germany is undergoing the most savage dictatorship the world has ever seen, not because its working class is weak, but because its working class is the strongest in the capitalist world and the nearest to the victory of the proletarian revolution.

THE British and French labour leaders who boast of the immunity of their countries from Fascism are only paying tribute to the backwardness of their own movements. "Before the war," observed Lenin (speech to the All-Russian April Conference in 1917), "England was the

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freest country in the world. *There was freedom in England because there was no revolutionary movement.*" The formal " freedom " was only the mirror, the counterpart, of the real subjection. And if to-day those " freedoms " are being steadily eaten into and cut down, if police expenditure is trebled since the war and the police are being centralised and militarised, if freedom of agitation and assembly and demonstration is being more and more cut away, if the trade union machine on top is absorbed into unity with capitalism and the State, and the price of criticism of labour leaders is assessed at seven thousand pounds by the courts, all this is only a measure of the awakening of the working class. The awakening of the working class pricks the myth of bourgeois " freedom " and lays bare the lash of the despot. The degree of violence, the degree of coercion and restriction of rights, the variation of methods between open fascism or partial pre-fascism with a decaying " democratic " cover, corresponds to the degree of development of the working class and of the relations of the class struggle.

WITHIN this difference of the outer mechanism of class-violence and of class-relations, the basic economic policy of capitalism in England, Germany or the United States shows marked similarity. There is the same reinforcing of the monopolist dictatorship of finance-capital through the extension of the State mechanism over the whole economy, bureaucratic regimentation, extraordinary measures to buttress up the profits of the big concerns, extreme measures for the conflict on the world market and for eventual war. Keynes writes of Roosevelt, not as a foreign statesman in a foreign country, but as the leader of world capitalism, as the last " white hope " to save capitalism :

> Mr. Roosevelt has made himself the trustee for those in every country who seek to mend the evils of our condition by reasoned experiment within the framework of the existing social system. If he fails, rational change will be gravely prejudiced throughout the world, leaving orthodoxy and revolution to fight it out.
>
> (J. M. Keynes, " Mr. Roosevelt's Experiment," *Times*, Jan. 2, 1934.)

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And Roosevelt emphasises the whole character of the transformation as no temporary short-time expedient, but, in his view, a " permanent re-adjustment of many of our social and economic arrangements " :

> In the past few months as a result of our action we have demanded of many citizens that they should surrender certain licences to do as they pleased in their business relationships ; but we have asked this in exchange for the protection which the State can give against exploitation by their fellow men, or by combinations of their fellow men.
>
> Industry is organising itself with a greater understanding that reasonable profits can be earned, while at the same time protection can be assured to guarantee to labour adequate pay and proper conditions of work. . . .
>
> Though the machinery hurriedly devised may need readjustment from time to time, nevertheless I think you will agree with me that we have created a permanent feature of our modernised industrial structure, and that it will continue under the supervision, but not the arbitrary dictation, of the Government itself.
>
> (President Roosevelt, Message to Congress, January 3, 1934.)

THIS is the unadulterated gospel of State capitalism that is here being preached. But Hitler preaches in fact the same gospel, with the same talk of " reasonable profits " alongside the same supposed " guarantees to labour " of " adequate pay and proper conditions of work." And more ponderously the National Government, with a greater tardiness corresponding to the more prolonged decay and internal weakness of the British capitalist mechanism, advances to the same economic line. The Cabinet Minister most alive to the new trends and directly expressing them, Elliot (characteristically enough, the former Fabian), proclaims to the House of Commons on November 24th, 1933 :

> We shall be forced to come to the House to ask for wide and sweeping changes in the economic structure of this country. We shall be forced to do so by the necessity for economic planning.

Baldwin supplements this on November 27th :

> Among the great industries which must demand the further attention of the Government are coal, cotton, iron and steel, and shipping.

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And of the process already carried through under Elliot in the previously most disorganised British agriculture, the Westminster Bank *Review* reports in November, 1933 :

> The last stronghold of *laisser-faire* in England has fallen, and on its ruins is being raised a structure of rationalised production under government direction more far-reaching than exists in any other British industry.

ALL this " reorganisation " and " planning " is only reorganisation and planning for the saving of capitalist profits (" to mend the evils of our condition within the existing social system " in the delicate phrase of Keynes). It has nothing to do with solving the crisis, with solving the basic contradiction between increased productive power and mass impoverishment ; it is the direct opposite of social scientific planning, of socialist planning, as carried out in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it is accompanied by increased impoverishment of the masses. The " progressive " Roosevelt orders the wholesale restriction of production, the destruction of cotton crops and similar measures. The expenditures account recently published of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration affords a pretty picture of modern capitalism :

EXPENDITURES UNDER THE A.A.A.

Allocation.	*Approximate Sum.*		
Cotton Acreage ploughed up	110	million	dollars.
1934 Cotton acreage reduction	150	,,	,,
Emergency pig-sow slaughter	33	,,	,,
Corn-hog production control	350	,,	,,
Wheat acreage reduction	102	,,	,,
Tobacco acreage reduction	21	,,	,,

This inspiring combination of Mammon and Juggernaut is the worshipped idol of the Labour Party and of the Trades Union Congress, the supposed representatives of the workers who produce and have to go short.

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PROFITS are raised. According to the National City Bank table of industrial profits, the net profits of 205 representative companies for the first nine months of 1933, compared to the first nine months of 1932, showed an increase of 562 per cent. (National City Bank of New York Review of Economic Conditions, November, 1933). But the same *Review* for December had to note that retail sales had gone down in volume ; retail prices on November 1, 1933, stood 25 per cent. above the May level ; but this price-increase was accompanied by a " reduced physical volume of retail trade." The annual report of the American Federation of Labour, which is pledged to the support of Roosevelt, is compelled to admit that, while the average working week is stated to have been shortened by $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours, and hourly wage rates to have received an average increase of $5\frac{1}{2}$ cents, " on account of the rise in prices which has occurred during the same period, the individual worker's real purchasing power has, in many cases, declined " ; and that the official return of unemployment showed still 10.7 millions unemployed in November (*Times*, January 10, 1934).

IN Britain the National Government calculates on permanent mass unemployment. Baldwin declared in the House of Commons on November 27, 1933 :

> There is the great core of unemployment. We do not know what the numbers may be. There may be a million, a million and a half, or less than a million, but there will be a vast number for whom there is but little hope of employment being found in this country. The gates of migration are closed against us. What can we do ? That is a problem that has baffled the country completely up to now.

" A vast number for whom there is but little hope of employment being found in this country." That is the hopeful prospect held out. What, then, is the answer ? Is there no solution ? There is a solution, but only within the conditions of socialism, of organising the social production of all for the needs of all. That is ruled out within the conditions of capitalism. What is the answer of capitalism ? The answer of the leader of capitalism is : " What can we do ? " He

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declares they are "baffled." Meanwhile, for lack of the productive labour that is needed and that capitalism refuses to organise, poverty and want sweeps forward throughout the population; reports pour in from the local health and official authorities throughout the country that overcrowding and insanitary housing is increasing, because the houses that are needed are not built, that malnutrition and lowered health of men, women and children is revealed. The medical experts of capitalism fight one another to discover the lowest possible level on which human life can subsist, to the last scrupulously measured calory and farthing (hundreds of millions being spent meanwhile on the destruction of food-stuffs); and when they have reached their lowest figure, below prison levels, information pours in of numbers who are not even receiving this level.

THIS is the situation which provides the background of the Unemployment Bill. The Unemployment Bill is the mechanism proposed by capitalism to maintain and organise its rule over the entire working class under the conditions of permanent mass unemployment. The name of the Bill is misleading for any true expression of its full scope; for in fact its range covers the entire working class, and extends far beyond unemployment relief to the most far-reaching scheme yet attempted for the bureaucratic regimentation of the workers, setting up of conscript labour under penal sanctions, cutting wages of the employed workers and setting up slave conditions without wages for the remainder, and smashing trade union safeguards and the right to strike. The new centralised and despotic Unemployment Insurance Board, not responsible to any elected authority, will hold within its range sixteen million workers from the ages of sixteen to sixty-five—in effect the entire working force of the proletariat. Any worker who goes through a spell of unemployment and exhausts the very limited standard benefit will fall within the claws of this Board; and its powers over him thereafter are powers which can only be described in terms of slavery. No such far-reaching measure of statutory enslavement of the working class has yet been attempted by capitalism in Britain.

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THE openly anti-democratic character of this Board is the sharpest expression of the present political trend of capitalism. In 1929 the Local Government Act abolished the old popularly-elected Boards of Guardians, on which the workers in many areas were able successfully to exert pressure or even secure sympathetic majorities, and replaced them by the Public Assistance Committees indirectly elected from the County Councils. This was already a step to break up the old democratic forms. But the experience of recent years, and not least the great unemployed struggles of the winter of 1932, showed that pressure could still be exerted even on the Public Assistance Committees. The Government therefore now proceeds to the step of withdrawing unemployment from the scope of the Public Assistance Committees or from any local authorities whatever.

> It is credibly reported that they were compelled to take their decision by the refusal of some Labour-controlled local authorities to administer unemployment relief on the terms laid down in the Bill, that is to say, under a test of household means.
>
> (*Round Table*, December, 1933.)

In fact, not the existence of Labour majorities on local authorities constituted the issue; plenty of Labour-controlled local authorities administered the Means Test and stood out against the demands of the unemployed; but the successful pressure of the unemployed and employed workers in a number of cases, also compelling in some cases the retreat of Conservative-controlled local authorities, compelled the Government to smash the democratic pretence and move to open autocracy. The new Unemployment Assistance Board is not even answerable to Parliament; the Minister who appoints it is not answerable for its decisions to Parliament. This is a very long step forward to the fascist type of openly anti-democratic state mechanism.

BUT it is when we come to the functions of this despotic Board that the reasons and necessity for its anti-democratic character become plain. The Bill divides the working class into three sharply separated sections, with a marked difference of status and conditions for each. First

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comes the section who are in more or less regular employment, or are only faced with short-time unemployment, and consequently receive—for a limited period—the standard benefit for which they have paid, and which by the original terms of unemployment insurance should be the equal right of all insured unemployed workers without distinction. They receive this standard benefit for a limited number of weeks, and then pass into the second class. The amount of standard benefit available is heavily limited, not only by the grotesque conception of making it " actuarially sound," that is, corresponding to the total of contributions in the midst of unexampled economic crisis for which the workers bear no responsibility (in other words, cutting down insurance benefits at the moment when they are most needed, on the grounds that they are too much needed), but in addition by adding the charge of all previous accumulated " debt " of the Unemployment Fund, amounting to one hundred and fifteen million pounds (that is, the extra costs for high unemployment above estimates, or, in other words, for the economic crisis), to be paid off, with interest, from current contributions at the rate of about five million pounds a year. That is the tattered remnant of the original unemployment " insurance " restricted now to a diminishing, relatively " favoured " section (" favoured " in the sense that they can actually receive 15s. 3d. a week benefit of right in the earlier weeks of their unemployment). This is the first class, the topmost class, of the new system.

THE second class is the large body of those who have run out of standard benefit, and are faced with longer unemployment. It is to deal with these that the mechanism of the new Bill is above all devised. For the " crime " of being robbed of their employment by capitalism, they are to be segregated into a new pariah class, at the mercy of the new despotic Board, and deprived of even the limited citizens' rights of wage-workers. They become serfs of the despotic Board : they are subjected to the means test, not only for themselves, but for their relatives (a transparent device for cutting the wages of the employed workers, by

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making them bear, to the last penny of possibility, the cost of maintaining the unemployed workers, and leaving the shoulders of the wealthy capitalists free); they can be subjected to forced labour without wages, drafted to camps, &c., at the will of the Board and its officials. Finally, comes the third class of those who are for any reasons " disallowed " by the Board, or show any resistance to its system of slavery (" cases of special difficulty "); these are relegated to the workhouse or prison. This elaborately graded hierarchy of subjection of the entire proletariat (with full citizens' rights, in effect, only for the bourgeoisie) is the final working out of the most modern capitalist " democracy."

THE significance of this statutory division of the proletariat into separate grades is obvious. Capitalism can only maintain its power by the division of the exploited masses. But the basis of this division has been profoundly affected by the changes of technique and the consequences of the crisis. Previously, the main basis of division of the proletariat in the imperialist countries was the division of the skilled " aristocracy of labour," with relatively better conditions and strong, if narrowly self-centred, organisation, from the unskilled masses below. But the crisis and rationalisation has heavily undermined this basis of capitalist power. It is just the sections of the old skilled " aristocracy," the engineers, miners and textile workers, who have been hardest hit by the crisis, and of whom hundreds of thousands have been thrown into prolonged unemployment. Rationalisation has brought forward new types of semi-skilled labour, no longer with the old traditions of organisation, while prolonged unemployment has made possible successive driving out of militants from production. Thus capitalism proceeds to shift its basis to meet the new conditions. The process of revolutionisation spreads among widening sections of the former " aristocracy " of labour. And capitalism proceeds to build up a new " aristocracy " of those who are still in regular employment in the conditions of extreme crisis and rationalised production.

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THE connection of this process with the transformation of trade unionism, the development to Mondism, the increasing rôle of the general labour unions under the types of a Bevin, can be traced. It is a measure of the degradation of conditions that in the new era to be a wage-worker at all, to be in regular employment, is to be in a relatively privileged situation. This begins to become the new " aristocracy " of labour. But for those who are thrown into prolonged unemployment, including a large proportion of the former militants, for those sections who are becoming visibly affected by the process of revolutionisation, for these capitalism prepares its whips and scorpions. Thus capitalism seeks to drive a wedge into the working class on the basis of the conditions of the crisis, and to break the common struggle. The unemployed workers, brought under the slave conditions of the despotic Board, are to be used to break the already weakened remaining trade union standards and safeguards of the employed workers. It is against this whole process that is the supreme importance of the united front of all unemployed and employed workers against the common enemy, capitalism.

THE National March and Congress is a big step forward towards building the new united front. The united front can only be built in action. One of the greatest dangers confronting the working class struggle in Britain at the present stage is the *illusory* sense of *impotence*, which is widespread and is deliberately inculcated by the Labour Party and trade union leadership. The impossibility of struggle—this is the key and centre of all Labour teaching to the workers in the present period of extreme crisis and weakening of capitalism. The impossibility of struggle against Fascism—that was the line of Social-Democracy in Germany, which therefore refused the Communist proposals for the united front against Fascism, instead supported Hindenburg as the only " practical " path, and thereby helped Hitler to power. The impossibility of revolution and working-class power—this is the central teaching of Labourism and Left Labourism alike (" Any attempt at violent revolution in Britain must

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fail "—Sir Stafford Cripps at Gosport, *Daily Herald*, Dec. 18, 1933), from which they draw their conclusions of passive parliamentarism and kissing the toes of King George in order to show what stalwart champions of " democracy " they are. The impossibility of any present struggle against the capitalist offensive and the National Government attack—this is the line of the official trade union and Labour leadership, from which they draw their conclusion of the refusal of the united front and vicious condemnation and sabotage of every attempt at struggle and resistance on the part of the workers.

ARE, then, the Communists fools and blind visionaries who call the workers to the struggle at the present time? And are the Labour and trade union leaders wise and thoughtful fathers of their people who wish to save them from breaking their heads against a stone wall? Not at all. The greatest fear of the Labour and trade union leaders is, not that the workers may suffer through struggle, but that they may *gain* through struggle, that they may *conquer* through struggle, thus disproving the whole Labour philosophy. This was shown with inescapable clearness last year, when the workers' victorious struggle wrung concessions from the authorities at Birkenhead, Belfast and elsewhere; and these *victories of the workers, not their defeats, aroused a howl of panic and indignation from the Labour and trade union leaders*, that the Government was giving in to the workers and thus rendering the Labour position impossible and playing into the hands of the common enemy, Communism. What was the complaint of the leader of the Labour Party, Lansbury. in the House of Commons? " The respect for political democracy was in danger of being wiped out. At Birkenhead after the riots a great concession was made to the men who had demonstrated, and in Belfast the same thing had happened." What was the complaint of the Deputy-Leader of the Labour Party, Sir Stafford Cripps, the " left " hero? " Members of the Labour Party had been doing their utmost to try to get the unemployed away from the evil influences of the Communists. It was a tremendous task. What were they to say

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to the unemployed of Bristol who pointed to Birkenhead? When they told the unemployed that they could achieve nothing by rioting, they were met at once by the argument of what happened at Birkenhead and Belfast. Was anybody going to convince an unemployed man who was told by a Communist that the way in which he could force relief out of a local authority was by rioting that these concessions had not been given as the result of force?" In these declarations the Labour leaders betrayed their innermost soul. The Labour leaders fear and hate the workers' struggle because they know that it can conquer, and because they know that its victory will sweep away their rôle. Rather than face that, they are prepared to go to the length of deliberately letting Fascism conquer, as in Germany, while they refuse and ban the united front.

THE Report of the General Council to the Trades Union Congress in 1931 reproduced their memoradum of evidence to the MacMillan Committee on Finance and Industry. In this memorandum they drew attention to the official figures of the net movements of wages during the years 1924 to 1929. But they failed to draw the moral of these figures. The figures fall into two three-year periods. During the first period, the three years 1924-6, there were a net increase of aggregate weekly wages by £525,000, or £27.3 millions a year. This was a period of active strike movement and of a widespread united front leading up to the general strike. The next three years, 1927-9, were the years of Mondism, of the triumph of reformist labour policy, of the disruption of the united front, and of the lowest strike totals on record. These three years showed a continuous fall in wages, totalling a net £579,000 a week, or £30.1 millions a year. All this was before the world economic crisis. There could be no clearer demonstration of the power of working-class struggle and of the united front, even in the conditions of capitalism in crisis, and of the ruinous consequences of the policies of Mondism, surrender, and disruption of the united front. The "practical" policy is not the Labour policy. Alike for the success of the

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immediate struggle, and for the final victory of the working-class revolution, the *practical* policy is the Communist policy of action, the policy of the united front.

BIG issues are raised in the present stage of struggle. The fight against the Unemployment Bill and the capitalist offensive is bound up with the fight against fascism and against war, for which these are the open and manifest preparation. The Unemployment Bill is a direct step in the increasing anti-democratic fascist transformation of the State machinery, no less than by its forced labour, training camps and semi-military regimentation of the youth, a direct step in war-preparations. This character breathes through the policy of the National Government no less than that of Roosevelt. In the present struggle we are fighting not only against the immediate attack of the National Government upon the conditions of the workers; we are fighting against fascism; we are fighting against the threatened imperialist war; we are fighting for the victory of the working-class revolution. We need to raise this issue ever more sharply and clearly, as the general crisis of capitalism deepens and extends (in despite of all the bourgeois parrot-clamour over the signs of a temporary upward movement as the beginning of a peaceful, harmonious recovery) and more and more manifestly drives to a violent outcome. This was the central meaning of the line of the Thirteenth Plenum of the Communist International in December. Against the Labour Cripps-Lansbury-Citrine line of the "impossibility of revolution" we raise the slogan of "Soviet Power!" We need to build the united working-class front of action in the immediate struggle. The line of the united front is the line of advance. We need to build anew in Britain the army of the working class in action, whose ranks were temporarily shattered and disrupted by the betrayal of the general strike and by the subsequent policies of betrayal;

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we need to build the ranks anew, this time under revolutionary leadership. This is the task confronting the United Front Congress of Action in February.

R. P. D.

Many Thanks

to readers in all parts of the world who have sent us their compliments and New Year good wishes.

Every reader can aid in realising those good wishes. Send in names and addresses to whom we may send free specimen copies of the Monthly and let us make a united resolution for an advance in 1934: "For every reader an extra reader." The welfare of the "Labour Monthly" is the personal responsibility of everyone of its readers and supporters. NOW is the most urgent time to discharge that responsibility.

This year must be one of rising circulation.

That's imperative.

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THE POWDER MAGAZINE IN THE FAR EAST

By W. M. HOLMES

MONGOLIA has emerged from the obscurity of its pastoral Asiatic existence into a front place in international politics. It is no cause within Mongolia itself which has produced this effect, but the operation of an exterior force, namely, the expansive activity of Japanese Imperialism. Before spring is here, Mongolia will be occupying an even more important place in the war plans of the Japanese Imperialists. For they are pushing ahead at high speed their scheme for the construction of a new Mongolian puppet state on principles tried and approved during their two years' occupation of Manchukuo.

The picturesque reports which have recently appeared in the British press regarding the decision to enthrone Pu-yi, present "head" of the state of Manchukuo, as Emperor of the Manchus and Mongols, are merely an inadequate reflection of a process of development which has been long and carefully fostered by the Japanese Imperialists with certain precise objects. These objects are first the extension of Japanese domination to Inner Mongolia, and, second, the advance from this base against the Soviet territories of the Baikal region.

Before attempting to describe more exactly the details of the Japanese activities, it may be well to glance at the scene of operations. Westward from Manchuria—Japan's state of Manchukuo—and northward from Peking, beyond the Great Wall, lie the territories of Mongolia. The southern and lesser area is Inner Mongolia. The northern, and larger, partly separated by a tongue of the Gobi desert, was formerly the Chinese province of Outer Mongolia. It is now the independent Mongolian National Republic, ruled by a democratic People's Government which has maintained power for the last ten years.

For a thousand miles and more the frontiers of this territory march with those of Soviet Siberia—that is to say, from near Irkutsk, west of Lake Baikal, to near Manchuli, the Manchurian frontier station of the Trans-Siberian Railway. It is necessary to go into these geographical details in order to perceive the reason for Japan's high-speed penetration of Mongolia. It is already well known, from the Tanaka memorandum, that the full-fledged imperialist plans of Japan are not limited by the cutting off of Vladivostock and the Soviet maritime province. This can be attempted via the eastern section of the Chinese Eastern Railway,

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and the rivers Sungari and Amur. But the Tanaka memorandum names Trans-Baikal, with all its mineral wealth, as the coveted prize. For the attack on this region, it is necessary to establish a Japanese-Mongolian front.

The advance must be made by way of Ulan-Bator (formerly Urga), the capital of the Mongolian National Republic. It must strike at Verkhne Udinsk, the Siberian end of the old caravan line from Urga, and the present airport for Soviet-Mongolian communications, as well as the gateway to central Siberia. It must also be directed against Chita, the junction controlling the Amur branch of the Trans-Siberian railway which gives access to Blagoveschensk, Khabarovsk and Vladivostock without crossing Manchurian territory. By seizing these vital centres the Japanese would cut communications between the western territories of the Soviet Union and the Far East.

Having in mind the unconcealed aims of Japanese Imperialism and the steps which are obviously necessary for their attainment, we can see behind the picturesque stage-setting of the proposed enthronement of Pu-yi, once China's boy Emperor, as ruler of the Manchus and Mongols. The Japanese are, of course, not strangers in Mongolia. Their fur-buyers and other traders have in past years been as regular visitors to Chahar and Suiyuan as Americans and British. Consequently, it was not difficult for the astute Japanese, as soon as their state of Manchukuo was well under way, to begin drawing the Mongolian " princes " and feudal chiefs towards them.

Bribery, promises of ample markets and high prices for their products, and independence from China, were the baits held out to the Mongolian princes. The latter is an alluring one, since it involves the hope that, freed from the necessity to pay taxes to China, the independent Mongolian princes will wax rich and powerful on the revenue they extract from their subjects. A vain hope, for the Japanese are not such philanthropists as to leave Mongolia free of imperial tribute. But this is a bait which they well understand how to handle. Hence the careful denials of Japanese control and the pretence that the " movement " for an independent Mongolia arises from the spontaneous desire of the Mongolian peoples.

The " movement " generated by playing on the feudal rulers' avarice took a step forward, some months ago, through a conference in Mukden at which Mongolian and Manchurian princes discussed the project of a Mongolian buffer state to be amalgamated later with Manchukuo to form a Manchu-Mongol Empire. Japanese support was promised for an independent Mongolian state, not subordinate to Manchukuo. The popularisation of the plan was undertaken by Te Muk-chu, an influential Mongolian prince. Beginning his campaign in Suiyuan, the part of

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Inner Mongolia nearest to Peking, he secured sufficient support to enable the calling of a conference of feudal lords, last October, who proclaimed the independence of Inner Mongolia.

The reasons for the benevolence of the Japanese Imperialists towards the Mongolian princes have already been clearly enough hinted. It needs only to be remarked that these declarations of the " independence " of Manchurian and Mongolian territories are always preceded and accompanied by Japanese military occupation. The " freeing " of Jehol from " bandits," and from Chinese " misrule " last March was preceded by a large-scale military advance. The proclamation of an independent Mongolian Republic of Dolon-nor was accompanied by the arrival of Colonel Mitsumara with military expedition. The declarations of the independence of Inner Mongolia in Suiyuan were, according to Peking reports, actually posted up by Japanese soldiers. And it is certainly a fact that immediately afterwards Japanese troops appeared from this province and, in violation of the Tangku Armistice, occupied strategic points near Kalgan on the Peking-Suiyuan railway.

The Japanese imperialists are thus repeating their Manchurian tactics in Mongolia with great energy and speed, and, it would be foolish to deny, with considerable apparent success. With the aid of a corrupt ruling class, well bribed, they aim at building up an army of feudal levies to support the Imperial forces. Recent reports put the number already recruited at 50,000 and the aim at 200,000. The pretence that the rapid organisation of such an army has as its purpose the " pacification " of Inner Mongolia would be absurd. Neither could there be any reason to believe that it was required to resist attack from China proper. There is already sufficient evidence that Nanking will swallow any pill administered by its Japanese masters and the only foe against which it will launch its armies is the Chinese Soviets.

But the recruitment of a Mongolian army on such a scale implies war. And the objective lies to the north. First, the Mongolian National Republic and then the Soviet Union. And the next moves in this plan of campaign may be expected at any moment. Much has been said of the restraining hand of winter on the Japanese armies pitted against the Soviet Union, and much of what is said is exaggeration. Admitting the horrors of winter on those wind-swept steppes, which must be felt to be believed, it must also be admitted that men can be acclimatised. And Japanese troops did advance through heavy frost to Jehol last March. There is no doubt that this was an advance preparation for larger-scale operations under more severe conditions.

The Japanese fear more the Red Air Force than the frost. And this is a reason why, if they are to attack the Soviet Union this year, they may be expected to try to bring their preparations to a head by the end of March. Because the melting snows are a heavy handicap to aviation.

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In any case, the history of the past few months shows a steadily accelerating pace in preparations for attack. Consider this little diary for November and December, 1933:

NOVEMBER 10: The Japanese press agencies broadcast a provocative report of the shooting down of Japanese aeroplanes by Soviet artillery.

NOVEMBER 14: The Japanese member of the Committee of the Disarmament Conference on the control of armaments replied to a speech by the Soviet delegate, for control, by refusing the proposition on the grounds of Japan's "special position."

Manchukuo forces occupy Yinkow (Newchwang) on the Liao River, taking control of the river shipping which was formerly under international administration.

NOVEMBER 19: Fourteen Soviet citizens employed by the Chinese Eastern Railway arrested at Harbin by Manchukuo police.

DECEMBER 3: The Japanese Cabinet adopts the 1934 Budget allotting nearly one billion yen for armaments. This is sixty per cent. of the entire budget and is the largest sum ever allocated by Japan for war purposes. Moreover, it is almost exactly equal to the deficit on the 1933 budget, which has not been met and cannot be covered by taxation.

DECEMBER 5: Chinese report establishment of "independent" Government of Inner Mongolia. Japanese reveal plans for military aerodrome at Shanhaikwan, Peking-Mukden railway frontier station.

DECEMBER 11: Arrests of Soviet employees on Chinese Eastern Railway increased to 28 in defiance of protests of Soviet Consul-General at Harbin.

These few entries show on the one hand the provocative hand of Japanese Imperialism in international relations and its mailed fist at home driving the Government to desperate finance even against the opposition of such bourgeois politicians as Takahashi, the aged Finance Minister.

To describe this situation as explosive is to use restrained language. And if the other factors in the Far Eastern situation are considered the imminent danger of catastrophe becomes even clearer. Tibet, like Mongolia, has recently emerged to the front of the stage. And here a picture of inter-imperialist conflict is revealed. The Dalai Lama who has suddenly died was an ally of British Imperialism. It is suggested that this was the cause of his end, by poison administered by the agents of Japan. Be that as it may, it introduces at once the possibility that Nanking, at Japan's orders, will put forward the Panchen Lama, head of Japan's new "independent" Mongolian state, as the new ruler of Tibet. Japanese Imperialists have not concealed their jealousy over the British advance in Tibet and the buying over of the Chinese Governor of the neighbouring province of Szechwan, which was effected exactly during the period when the Japanese were advancing and consolidating their power in Manchuria. Now as it were in answer to the Japanese

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advance in Mongolia comes the news of the recognition by Chiang Kai-shek, himself, of the existence of special British interests in Canton and their right to protection as well as an official grant to the British of a mineral concession in the province of Szechwan in exchange for the pledge given by Sir Miles Lampson, who conducted these negotiations on behalf of Britain, of complete British support for the Nanking Government.

Turning to the revolt of the 19th army General in Fukien, with American support, we find another irritant to Japanese Imperialism. American domination in this province would place American bombing planes within a short flight of Formosa, Japan's southern-most station in the China seas. The vigour of Chiang Kai-shek's advance against the rebel government, and its apparent success, according to reports received at the moment of writing, indicate Japanese determination to nip this enterprise of American Imperialism in the bud.

It can, in fact, be said that war is already being waged between Japanese and American Imperialism on Chinese soil. The fight for the Pacific and for the partition of China between the Imperialist Powers is already at a stage from which it is possible for transition to actual warfare to take place in the twinkling of an eye.

The forces of resistance to this process of Imperialism are the Chinese Soviets, the Communist Party of Japan, and the peace policy of the U.S.S.R. Of the latter it cannot be too often said that only a Socialist Government could have conceived and maintained this policy. It has proved possible for the Soviet Union to build up its defence forces to a pitch of power from which its leaders can calmly and confidently announce their readiness to deal with any aggressor. And at the same time there is not a bourgeois, imperialist politician, not even in Japan or its closest ally, Nazi Germany, who can scrape up the ghost of a pretext for accusing the U.S.S.R. of aggressive designs. Lloyd George, who himself as Premier waged imperialist war of intervention in the early days of the Soviets, recently paid a special tribute to the manner in which the U.S.S.R. had preserved peace in the Far East.

The Soviet Union has its interests in China, Mongolia, Tibet—in all the countries of central Asia which lie under the threat of war or suffer under the fact of it. But it stands apart from imperialist intrigue and rivalry. This is possible only for a Socialist Government which has, by its nature, no desire for new territory or concessions for exploitation and which, also by its nature, can never take the aggressive action which would throw the toiling masses of one country into deadly conflict with those of another to serve the interests of an exploiting class.

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TOWARDS THE I.L.P. EASTER CONFERENCE

I.—Trends in the I.L.P.

By ERIC WHALLEY
(*Chairman of I.L.P. Affiliation Committee*)

IN this period of rapid capitalist decline, the forms of the working-class movement are subject to rapid changes, and forces inside the various sections are often transformed from progressive to reactionary influences overnight. This phenomenon is explainable by the fact that the changes in the forms of the working-class movement are spontaneous reflections of the rising wave of militancy in the ranks of the working class, that are prevented from *progressively* moving to their logical conclusion—Communism—because they *are* spontaneous and are not based on an understanding of the requirements of revolutionary struggle.

This by no means infers that the waves of militancy arising in organisations that have been the strongholds of reformism, can be disregarded as a passing phase, on the contrary it means that those workers inside these awakened sections have an important task, the task of bringing these unconscious forces into consciousness and directing them to what must be their final goal—Communism.

The I.L.P. affords striking confirmation of this analysis. At the Bradford Conference the I.L.P. broke with the Labour Party of which it had been the main support for 40 years, and at Derby completed its organisational break with reformism by withdrawing from the Labour and Socialist International.

The steps taken by the I.L.P. reflected the rising militancy of the working class, and the growing disgust at the betrayal of the working class by the reformist leaders. Disaffiliation was the result of a series of very bitter political experiences of the rank-and-file of the I.L.P.

In the process of this organisational break with reformism, the I.L.P. shed a number of its leaders, but those who constitute the present leadership, gave nominal support to both decisions. It was soon to be made clear, however, that the acquiescence of the leaders in the formal break with reformism, was not an indication of their acceptance of Marxist-Leninism, the basis of the revolutionary movement. There was a positive proposal at the Derby conference to approach the Comintern with a view to the I.L.P.'s co-operation in their work, and this proposal

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met with the vigorous opposition of Paton, *speaking on behalf of the N.A.C.* Paton sought to condemn the Third and Second Internationals alike as bankrupt and reactionary, and suggested, as an alternative, to co-operation with the C.I., continued association with the Left Socialist groups, with the view to the formation of an all-embracing International :

> The basis of co-operation between the I.L.P. and the other " Left " Socialist parties was the attempt to break down the barriers which now existed between the great mass organisations attached to the L.S.I. (Labour and Socialist International) and the various sections attached to the 3rd. (Paton, at the Annual Conference, as reported in the *New Leader*, April 21, 1933.)

The conference passed judgment on this infamous theory of equal blame and the reactionary proposal for a new International by declaring for Co-operation with the Comintern. This decision marked the end of any " progressive " trend in the I.L.P. leadership ; they had exhausted their " revolutionary " fervour by organisational breaks with the Labour Party and the L.S.I. Since that decision, the majority of the leadership has had a reactionary influence on the I.L.P. The spirit of Derby has been violated, and all the theories of " equal blame " resurrected by Brockway, whilst the " Left " Socialist groups hold their toy pistol at the head of the Comintern : " If there is no change in your tactics and organisation. . . ."

This, in spite of, and in defiance of, the conference decision.

The Bradford and Derby conference decisions reflected the growth of militancy in the working class, and the growing disillusionment of the workers with the reformist leaders, but the organisation of this militancy and its direction towards specific issues, was the work of the Revolutionary Policy Committee (R.P.C.), which was the most advanced section of the Party.

Since Derby, however, what has been the attitude of the R.P.C. ? After the Derby Conference we saw organised opposition to the Conference decision, for which the R.P.C. had fought so vigorously, from two wings : (1) the Sandhamites, who, nakedly reactionary, demanded the withdrawal of the I.L.P. from United Front activity with the C.P. ; and (2) the Brockwayites, whose " criticism," whilst dressed in the second-hand clothes, provided by marine store dealer, Mr. Trotsky, was objectively the same as the Sandhamites. The policies of both groups were calculated to lead the I.L.P. rank-and-file back, by the nose, to the Labour Party and the L.S.I. from which they had just emerged with so much difficulty. One by the direct route (Sandham is not as subtle as he might be), and the other via the Two-and-a-half International.

In the face of this double offensive the national R.P.C. has been silent, and no attempt has been made to organise the revolutionaries against

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the reactionaries and to direct a campaign towards closer association with the Comintern. Time after time have slanders of the C.I. been left unanswered by the R.P.C. The machinery of the R.P.C. has been at a standstill. The offensive was taken by the reactionary wing and no opposition was forthcoming, and it was in the face of this barrage of anti-C.I. propaganda allowed to pass unchallenged, that much of the valuable ground gained at Derby was lost. The real gravity of the R.P.C.'s error is made clear by the fact that a large number of I.L.P. members did not respond to the appeals of the Brockwayites and the Sandhamites, *but left the Party, confused and perplexed.* This tragic position was only made possible by the failure of the revolutionary wing to give a clear lead and to mobilise support in defence of the Derby decision.

It was on the basis of these facts, and the recognition of the urgency of the situation, that the affiliation Committee was formed.

The Affiliation Committee has published a manifesto[1] drawing attention to the Derby Conference decision, and the " attacks " on the C.I. appearing in the *New Leader*. Reference is made in the manifesto to the good work of the R.P.C. prior to the Easter conference, but also to its lack of activity in the vital period *since* Derby, and states its policy clearly in this paragraph :

> We feel that the issues facing the international working class are so urgent and vital, that any further delay will be a crime against the working class, and will reduce our party to impotence.
>
> We have, therefore, formed a committee to put the issue clearly, by working for affiliation of the I.L.P. to the C.I.

Immediately after the preparation of this manifesto, the National R.P.C. evinced signs of a return to life by the publication of Bulletin, No. 10, " The Struggle Moves On."

Were we to receive at last from the R.P.C. a clear lead on the issue of affiliation ?

In this Bulletin the R.P.C. raises a number of " objections " to the strategy and tactics of the C.I., and it is important that they should be examined.

On page 5, par. 2, the Bulletin states :

> The C.I. has taken the view that the social-democratic leaders are social fascists, or, in other words, persons who, being in themselves conscious and deliberate allies of the ruling class, equally consciously and equally deliberately deceive the workers in the organisations which those leaders control, in order to hand them over complete to the ruling class . . . .
>
> We have endeavoured to state earlier in this article our estimation of the reformist leadership, and in the light of that estimation it is impossible to accept the classification of social fascists as correct.

[1] See *Daily Worker*, December 16, 1933.

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There is no difference in the two views (accepting for the time being the R.P.C.'s statement on the C.I. position) as to the ultimate *trend* of the T.U. leadership.

This is made clear by the R.P.C. not only saying that they are incapable of developing the class struggle to its necessary conclusion, not only adding that they take the workers along a path that implies the defence of capitalist institutions, but also finishing up with a quotation from Citrine and references to Henderson, all indicating that in the last resort the reformists " hand over " the workers to the ruling class. It would seem unnecessary, therefore, to cite Kerensky, Noske, Leipart, not to mention the T.U.C. in 1926 (admittedly a different stage).

If the R.P.C. recognises the objective outcome of Reformism, in what lies the difference in the two views ? Is it merely the question of the degree of consciousness of the reformist leaders ? Surely the revolutionary movement is not going to spend time arguing as to the exact degree of consciousness in the betrayal.

It seems important that the theory of Social Fascism should be understood as it is a valuable weapon in the hands of the revolutionary movement. It seems to me that Social Fascism can be defined as Social Democracy in an era of capitalist decline, when the policy of the reformist leaders, in holding the workers back from struggle and in disrupting the militant unity that is so necessary, is leading the mass of the working class to the shambles of Fascism. Social Democracy is objectively a wing of Fascism. It must be understood that almost daily experience is proving beyond doubt, to the mass of the workers, the accuracy and truth of the term Social Fascist. And this recognition means the orientation of the workers to those who so correctly analysed the policy of the Social Democratic leaders, *and* persistently fought them and offered militant leadership on day-to-day issues.

The second question raised in the Bulletin is the one concerning the relations of the Comintern to the reformist mass organisations, in particular, the Trade Unions.

The R.P.C. states its line on page 5, par. 3, as follows :

> Appreciating that the mass working-class organisations are the Trade Unions and the Co-operative Societies, it is necessary that every endeavour should be made to gain the confidence of the workers in those organisations with a view to transforming the lower sections into instruments capable of revolutionary action.

The Bulletin then continues to state what it assumes is the Comintern line by quoting the notorious Lozovsky statement appearing in the R.I.L.U. Magazine for February, 1932, when he stated : " That we want to break up the reformist Trade Unions, that we want to weaken them, that we want to explode the trade union apparatus and destroy it—of that there cannot be the slightest doubt. . . ."

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The R.P.C. states that it cannot accept this as the correct revolutionary approach. They are evidently unaware that Lozovsky repudiated the statement attributed to him as a misrepresentation of what he said. (*Daily Worker*, June 10, 1932.) Whilst the failure to notice Lozovsky's repudiation may be forgiven, it is inexcusable not to recognise the clear statement of policy contained in the twenty-one conditions and the Twelfth Plenum Resolutions, where the C.I. insists on work within the Unions, not to smash them, but to win over, as far as possible, the " lower sections," as the R.P.C. puts it. And so there is no real difference on this point.

Here again it is necessary to see the *trend*. The winning of the lower sections, necessarily involves conflict with the central apparatus. Whilst the C.I. does not want to split the Unions, the possibility must be seen at once of the reformist leaders expelling militant sections, &c. And at this point the expelled workers can obviously not be left unorganised.

The third " objection " contained in the Bulletin deals with the relations between the R.I.L.U. and the C.I.

The R.P.C. states that in its opinion the C.I. should not be in direct affiliation with Trade Unions, but should be an International of the Revolutionary Parties. As far as I can see, there *is* no suggestion that Trade Unions should affiliate to the C.I. It is the R.I.L.U. that adheres to the C.I.—it must, or there is no basis for its existence, but it does not *affiliate* to the C.I. which *is* an International of *Revolutionary Parties*.

At the end of the middle paragraph on page 5 of the Bulletin, however, the R.P.C. refers to " *if* the aim of securing disaffiliation from Amsterdam and affiliation with the R.I.L.U. leads to splitting off the revolutionary workers from those still under reformist leadership," then this means loss of contact and is wrong. Here again there is no real difference, the *trend* is towards the development of revolutionary consciousness in the rank-and-file and lower sections of the trade unions. At any given time there may be existing definite " breaks " such as the U.M.S., or Unions in which reformist influence has to some extent been undermined, such as N.A.F.T.A., or Unions in which the reformists are still in control. Within the latter, however, there is an " opposition " movement; and besides this there is not loss of contact when the new union has been set up: for example, the united front of the U.M.S. and the reformist members at many pits in Fife.

The function of the R.I.L.U. is to organise and help on that development, uniting, through affiliation, the trade unions which have been won over, also the T.U. " oppositions." Disaffiliation from Amsterdam and affiliation to the R.I.L.U. means the successful carrying through of the process. It is obvious that Amsterdam itself is not a means of contact with the rank-and-file.

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The fourth " objection " is the one concerning the extent to which the sections are able to draw up their programmes independently of the direction of the International. The Bulletin states :

> We are in complete agreement with condition 15 of the 21 conditions, which makes it clear that such a programme must apply " to the special conditions of their country and be in accordance with the resolutions of the C.I. . . . ."

This agreement with Condition 15 would imply that the point is raised because of the " unsatisfactory functioning " of the Congresses of the C.I. to which sections have the right of appeal in the event of the rejection of their proposed policy by the E.C.C.I. The reference is to the fact that the last World Congress was held in 1928, and the constitution provides that " World Congresses shall be convened every two years."

It would appear obvious that the reasons for this are purely practical —the absence of leading members from their countries for long periods in the face of a growingly acute world situation, and in an increasing number of cases, the extra risk entailed, &c. The real points at issue are these : (1) Has the failure to hold a World Congress been harmful to the revolutionary movement ; and (2) Is there any reason to suppose that a section's request for a full Congress on any serious matter has been, or would be, refused ?

In spite of these " objections " the R.P.C. finally welcomes " sympathetic " affiliation if it is satisfied on the objections it raises in the Bulletin. It seems that these objections are not real differences, but show lack of clarity within the R.P.C. The important point is, that the R.P.C. line is based on this policy, and they are seeking affiliation to the C.I., *if they are satisfied on the points raised.*

The N.A.C. will be asked, according to the R.P.C.'s proposed line, to continue negotiations with the C.I. and attempt to arrive at a satisfactory agreement on these points. It is true that the R.P.C. line would empower the N.A.C. to conclude the negotiations by affiliation without a further conference and prevents them from closing the negotiations in any other way without the instructions of a further conference, but it leaves the question of negotiation in the hands of an openly hostile N.A.C. who could, with ease, delay the matter for a further twelve months.

During this period, when the world situation will grow more and more acute, raising the question of the mobilisation of the workers for struggle and demanding greater clarity and closer revolutionary unity in preparation for decisive class struggles, the I.L.P. will be suspended in mid-air, a prominent debating platform, instead of a real revolutionary force, playing a powerful part in the historic struggles of the working class. During this period the barrage of anti-Comintern propaganda could continue through the official sources ; in these conditions the vital forces

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of the I.L.P. would be dissipated, and a crime would be perpetrated on the working class. We should recognise these facts, and have the clear-cut proposal for affiliation to the C.I. as the basis of our policy.

The R.P.C. stresses the gravity of the whole situation, and it is because the situation *is* grave that we cannot be content with any qualified recommendations for sympathetic affiliation. Those who really want closer association with the C.I. must do their utmost to dispel the doubts and "objections," not give publicity to more doubts. This viewpoint will be accepted by the great majority of the R.P.C.'ers I have no doubt; this is made clear by the fact that one of the most vital sections of the R.P.C., the section which above all others was responsible for bringing the National R.P.C. back to life, is staunchly supporting the line of the Affiliation Committee. What should be the line of other R.P.C.'ers and R.P.C. groups throughout the country?

(1) Raise the demand that the National R.P.C. shall accept the line of the Affiliation Committee, and agree to their proposal to work in unison for the widest possible campaign for the securing of affiliation to the C.I.

(2) Approach the Affiliation Committee group in your area, and formulate plans for mobilising support by conferences, speakers at branches, papers on the question of affiliation, &c.

There is no doubt that a united campaign of the R.P.C. and the Affiliation Committee expressing itself in a widespread and intensive campaign would result in a victory at the Easter Conference. No realistic observer can deny that the I.L.P. membership is clamouring for a clear lead.

Let us give the lead, a lead that will direct the I.L.P. to revolutionary clarity, to the establishment of the revolutionary unity. If we fail it will mean the disintegration of the forces of the I.L.P. and its abject futility; if we succeed, as we can and must, it means that the I.L.P. will be playing a significant part in the struggle for power.

II.—The International Question

By OBSERVER

AT Derby in 1933 events in the I.L.P. culminated in a sharp break with its past policy. Two perspectives were now opened in the all-decisive International field. One, which was the line pursued by the National Administrative Council (N.A.C.) was that although the Second International had completely failed, the Third was equally unsuccessful. Nevertheless, outside the Second and Third

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there was a group of " Left " Socialist Parties who realised both this failure and the necessity of a " new " policy and a " new " International.

Secondly, this was the line of the Revolutionary Policy Committee (R.P.C.). According to this line the I.L.P. is in complete disagreement with the Second International, yet it has very few differences with the Third. Undoubtedly there did not yet exist a complete unity of outlook between the I.L.P. and the C.I.; because of this they did not ask for complete affiliation; the I.L.P. should assist the C.I. while the *minor* differences which were over organisation could afterwards be thrashed out in detail. With the very close vote of 83 to 79 the latter line was carried against the wishes of the N.A.C., and despite the N.A.C.'s control of the I.L.P. machinery.

Immediately following this conference the C.I. sent a telegram to the I.L.P. welcoming this step and broaching the possibility of a single united Revolutionary Party in Great Britain. The conception of a United Revolutionary Party is undoubtedly popular in the I.L.P., but almost entirely as a somewhat Utopian occurrence of the dim future. In addition, the active organised forces of the Left (the R.P.C.) were against its immediate formation, consequently there has been little propaganda in its favour and correspondingly weak support.

Although Fenner Brockway promised that the N.A.C. would, in interpreting its report, take account of the Derby resolution, in practice it has not done this. The *New Leader* has continually attacked the C.I. From April 21 to the end of the year the C.I. has only been favourably mentioned six times: (1) in a letter in reply to Brockway, printed by the side of another praising him!; (2) in a reply to a full page article by a virulent enemy of the C.I., and followed by an equally long reply to the reply! In a complaint with regard to the Editorial attitude towards the C.I. followed by a reply! The other three times are the letters from the C.I. In addition, Manuilsky has been invited to reply to articles by Trotsky and Thalheimer, and to be followed by a summing up by Brockway, avowedly an enemy of the C.I.

In June, Brockway published an article in the *New Leader* which " criticised " the C.I. by proclaiming its bankruptcy, and declaring that it was leading the working class to disaster.

Although this is opposed to the line adopted at the Derby Conference, Brockway declares that its resolution entails the right of the I.L.P. to criticise the C.I. and that the United Front agreement between the C.P.G.B. and the I.L.P. reserves the right to mutual criticism; the inference from Brockway's articles being that his attitude is that of the I.L.P. and therefore that the Communists' attacks upon him are attacks upon the I.L.P., thereby distorting what should be an extra-Party discussion, by the introduction of Party loyalties and transforming it into inter-Party polemics.

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In July the United Front was broken off by the Lancashire Divisional Council and among the reasons adduced was that " owing to the peculiar tactics of the Communist Party, imposed by Moscow, the organised workers will not take common action with it."

In July the Welsh Divisional Council broke off the United Front on the grounds that it could serve no useful purpose.

It is obvious that the Right-wing was taking the offensive and that it necessitated a counter-offensive from the Left, but the National R.P.C. failed to function (owing, I believe, to unfortunate internal difficulties), practically leaving the field to the Right.

The Divisional groups of R.P.C. supporters have actively persisted in United Front work, but have only recently taken a clear line on the question of sympathetic affiliation to the C.I. ; I believe that all members of the R.P.C. are in favour of this and of course the Committee for Affiliation to the C.I. is actively engaged in organising support for this line at Divisional Conferences leading up to the National Conference at Easter.

The real nature of the N.A.C. line came fully to the fore at the Paris Conference of Left Socialists in August. There, although the I.L.P. was opposed to the first resolution, it was submitted by Fenner Brockway as Chairman of the International Committee which had drawn up the resolution !

This resolution, speaking of the bankruptcy (a popular word) of the C.I., declares that the policy of the German Communist Party was pseudo-revolutionary, that the bureaucracy of the Third International has given up the interests of the World Revolution under the slogan of " Socialism in one country," and has persecuted all critics as heretics ; and that owing to this we are faced with the task of re-creating the international movements of the working class, and the first step must be the convening of a World Congress !

The I.L.P. representative then stated that his Party was in general agreement with the principle of the resolution, but considered its wording extremely unwise ! " There never yet had been an International into which the workers could throw themselves 100 per cent." He said that the I.L.P. was opposed to the *intention* of establishing a new International (Democratic respect for the Derby Resolution), but only until the World Congress has met and explored the possibilities of the unification of all revolutionary sections. If the Third International is unprepared to change its tactics and organisation then the time will have to come for a new International.

Finally, the I.L.P. would be compelled to vote against the resolution but would do everything in its power to carry out the decisions arrived at.

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Ah ! that undemocratic Comintern !

The general line of the N.A.C. is easily deducible from these declarations and the articles in the *New Leader*. They are opposed to the *immediate* formation of a new International, as out of common fairness the C.I. must be given an opportunity to alter its " strategy and control to suit those of the parties who meet in Paris."

The French Party of Proletarian Unity who think that inter-Party polemics are useless, this hateful struggle between Parties prevents them from being Marxist !

The Norwegian Labour Party who look with amazement at the tendencies towards the C.I. inside the I.L.P.

The German *Lenin*bund consider that not only have the capitalist countries adopted State Capitalism but so also to a large extent had the Soviet Government !

The Russian " Left " Social Revolutionaries who remember that the workers and peasants in Russia had also suffered under the U.S.S.R. and must be saved !

The International Left Opposition, whose aim is to overthrow the Soviet Government.

To suit these revolutionary Marxists the Comintern must alter its organisation. To allow the Communist Parties of the World to collaborate with these Revolutionary Socialists, the Comintern must enter a new and unified International. The Comintern must approach these Parties to have its pseudo-revolutionary programme revised ; to take account of the crushing of the German Communist Party and alter their organisation to include *all* " Revolutionary Socialists."

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (and its International, the Third) must lose its " nationalism " and submit to the World proletarian movement as expressed in the New International.

What, then, is the nature of an International ? Is it to be a loose collection of all who will say Revolution, divided into National boundaries, with each decision having to be confirmed by the executive of each National Party before it can be put into action ? Or, rather is it to be a disciplined World Unit of Revolutionary Marxists, having the common theory of Marxism, the common aim of Revolution and the building of Socialism ?

It is the duty of all revolutionary I.L.P'ers to support the latter line, but we must face up to the difficulties of the situation, we must realise that the Left forces in the I.L.P. have not consolidated their ground

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since last Easter, that it is essential to raise the strongest protest against the continued association with the Left Socialist Parties, to point out that this association will *not* lead to the " common action of all left-wing parties," but is inevitably leading to the formation of a New International, with an ideological basis fully endorsed by the National Leaders of the I.L.P.

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CRISIS AND THE WAY FORWARD IN WOOLLENS

By D. WILSON

BEFORE going off the gold standard in September, 1931, and the tariffs which were then imposed, the woollen industry had suffered especially in the crisis. Whilst unemployment generally had risen, amongst the woollen workers it became catastrophic!

PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED

	1929	1930	1931 1st qtr.	1931 3rd qtr.	1933 3rd qtr.
Average of all industries	11	16	21.5	23	19
Woollen	13	24	28.5	36	11.7

Thus there seems to have been a radical change in the woollen industry. Its unemployment is back at pre-crisis level. On what is the change based, and what are the prospects now before the woollen workers?

Economic Position

Before the war the British production of woollen goods was roughly in the proportions of 45 per cent. for export, and 55 per cent. for the home market. After the war, with the return to a partly stable position in 1924 it was shown that there had been a contraction of about 20 per cent. in the total volume of production of finished tissues. However, many of the wool capitalists had participated in the development of artificial silk which replaced wool in many garments. The contraction was mainly in the home trade. They clung to the hope that pre-war conditions would return with the persistent operation of the old policies of Free Trade and the Gold Standard.

But the contraction continued, and upon it came the trade slump of 1929 with its terrific decline in world-purchasing power. The export fell in 1931 to less than half its 1924 volume; almost to one-third of pre-war volume. The home market was fairly steady in spite of reduced purchasing power, partly because the fall of raw wool to one-half of its pre-war price made it cheap enough to replace cotton and artificial silk in certain articles.

Thus by the autumn of 1931 total production had shrunk to less than 70 per cent. of the 1924 volume, and there was now but 30 per cent. for export and 70 per cent. for home consumption. The cost to the

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woollen workers in two years of the crisis had been: 50,000 increase in the numbers unemployed, and 5,000 forced upon public relief for the first time in their lives. They stubbornly contested the MacMillan wage-cut of 9 per cent. in 1930, under the Labour Government, and had a further 11.7 per cent. cut in 1931. The capitalists preached that these cuts would stay the decline, but they were met within a few months by cuts in Germany, France and elsewhere; cuts which hit the woollen workers of Saxony, in particular, with especial force.

The last remaining hopes of a return to pre-war were smashed. By the time of the financial crisis of 1931 the woollen capitalists were well prepared to make a rapid turn to master the home market exclusively, and towards a more desperate fight with the French, German, Italian and Japanese competitors for the lessening export trade. They made this turn, on the basis of the depreciated £, and the tariffs which followed it. The following table approximately shows the success achieved.

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF WOOLLEN AND WORSTED TISSUES.

	1912	1924	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
	(in million square yards)						
Exports	224	210	165	115	88	82	95
Retained for Home Consumption ..	326	225	235	225	237	253	264
Total Production ..	550	443	400	340	325	335	359
Imports	72	27	38	38	51	8	8

(Production estimated by methods used in the Safeguarding Enquiry.)

Imports have been reduced by 80 per cent. to insignificant proportions, but total production remains only two-thirds of pre-war, and well below the 1929 level. British exports remain at a low crisis level.

A World Struggle for Markets

What, then, is the basis of the higher level of employment in the industry? First of all, the unemployment figures over-emphasise the improvement, because of the large numbers who no longer register for employment in the industry; the improvement is on the basis of a contraction of 8,000 persons since 1929, or 28,000 since 1924. The Ministry of Labour records the numbers employed as follows:

1912	1924	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
270	259	239	240	239	234	231

Moreover the woollen capitalists were specially assisted by a rapid rise in the price of raw wool, brought about by certain causes not likely to repeat themselves. In expectation of higher prices, users of wool, yarn and cloth set about replenishing their stocks, and this extended also to the clothing trade. One source of this windfall is in the nature of a

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miracle. In Australia, drought reduced the 1933 clip by 38,000 bales, or $11\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. compared with the previous year. In South Africa the prolonged drought caused losses of sheep estimated at 10 million head, and the clip was down by 20 to 25 per cent.

In addition, the artificial raising of prices in America under the N.I.R.A. caused a wave of replenishment of stocks there. America usually meets her own needs in wool supply but it was insufficient and they bought from Europe. Along with this went a wave of buying in Australia and the Argentine by the Japanese in connection with their war policy.

Thus the contradictions in the present improvement in woollens! There is little indication of healthy improvement in consuming power, but rather the reverse. And the attempts in the U.S.A. to restrict the production of raw material products like wool have shown that this becomes impossible so soon as there are prospects of profit. The coming seasons' wool clip promises to be a good one and it will require a rapid expansion of demand such as a large-scale war to continue the present improvement in wool prices.

The only course is therefore set for British woollen capital—a bitter struggle with desperate competitors for a lessening foreign market. The weapons they will use in the fight are those which are classic with all the imperialists; wage-cuts, longer hours, speeding-up, rationalisation, and "dumping"—(that is, charging monopoly prices at home in order to sell below cost abroad). All these methods are at the expense of the workers, by reduction in the standard of living, by unemployment, and, indirectly, as consumer.

Further, rationalisation and dumping go together—it is a question of reducing competition at home. In the first process, combing, an almost complete combination has been achieved during the crisis. The last amalgamation in the spring of 1933 involved the destruction of a considerable quantity of machinery. But in the main manufacturing processes there is much competition. The temptation of the protected home market, and the squeeze of the woolcombing combine, however, will push forward the spinning and weaving sections into combination. Complaints of the keen competition, and of the high combing charges were arising last summer and schemes were suggested for the scrapping of redundant machinery—estimated at 20 per cent.—especially in spinning.

The "more looms to a weaver" question, it may here be said, is not yet so acute as it is in Lancashire. Some firms have introduced four looms instead of the usual two, but the general introduction of "more looms" is far more difficult in woollens than in cotton, owing to the greater variations that still exist in the character of the yarns—more

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irregularities requiring personal attention. Inferior work as well as greater strain result from the system.

During the recent trade improvements the tendencies towards combination went somewhat into the background. As recession takes place they will again develop, but for the time being the main drive of the employers is towards intensified labour and longer hours.

Conditions of the Workers

What are the general conditions to-day of the quarter of a million workers and their half-million dependents, whose standard of life is a pawn in the struggle of the woollen capitalists ?

WOOLLEN AND WORSTED WORKERS—SECTIONAL TABLE.

Section	Number	Percentage			Method of Payment	Typical Wages		
		Male	Female	Juvenile		Men	Women	Juvenile
Wool Sorting ..	3,000	100	—	—	piece	63/- to 68/-	—	—
Wool Combing	11,000	65	35	10	time & bonus	45/-	26/-	—
Overlooking ..	5,000	100	—	—	time	64/- to 90/-	—	—
Spinning ..	77,000	25	75	35	time	50/- to 80/-	21/- to 26/-	12/6 to 17/6
Warp Dressing and Twisting	2,500	100	—	—	piece	60/- to 70/-	—	—
Weaving ..	82,000	15	85	10	piece	42/- to 56/-	*26/- to 34/- ‡30/- to 40/-	—
Warehousemen, &c.	5,000	100	—	—	time	44/-	—	—
Enginemen, &c.	2,500	100	—	—	time	57/6 to 62/6	—	—
	188,000							

*Worsted—mainly Bradford.
‡Woollen—mainly Huddersfield and Dewsbury, &c.
This table omits dyeing and certain other sections which merge with cotton and other industries.

In most of the sections given above there are very many sub-divisions, such as in spinning, where there are drawers, twisters, rovers, and so on. The method of payment is very involved, with various cost-of-living and other percentages ; especially this is so with the many pieceworkers.

The wages given above are typical wages which embrace the majority of the workers in the section concerned for a normal week, and at those mills which still adhere fairly closely to the old wages agreement which the employers' organisation repudiated in 1930. *But in many of the mills these wages are not adhered to. Probably one-quarter of the mills pay 20 per cent. less than this.*

Some of the mills, mainly in the combing section, have bonus systems to stimulate output. These may add from 2s. to 4s. to their wages.

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But these bonuses are steadily being withdrawn and their place taken by bullying on the part of the overlookers. Many of the combing employers insist upon non-union overlookers in order to permit this thoroughly Fascist dragooning of the workers.

Taken all the year round these wages are much reduced by short time or unemployment, probably 20 per cent. The pieceworkers suffer losses which are not accounted for in the Government figures, due to "waiting for warps" or working less looms, than the usual number, and also from bad material, which, owing to the speeding-up in all processes is beoming more and more common.

The average wage paid, given by the Ministry of Labour, covering all bonus and overtime, is approximately: 1929, 39s.; 1931, 35s.; 1933, 36s. These are calculated from returns from 75 per cent. of the mills. The 25 per cent. which do not supply figures will undoubtedly be the worst paid.

Overtime is worked practically at the employers' will, and the 55-hour week of pre-war days is becoming quite common. About one-third of the employers pay for overtime at ordinary time rates, instead of the time-and-a-quarter to which the workers are entitled.

The whole of the wage rates for the women spinners were originally fixed as being "juvenile," but there are now something like 20,000 women of mature years, many of them married and with families, who work for these juvenile wages.

The Anomalies Act has hit especially hardly at the married women in the wool textile industry. In Bradford alone at least 3,000 women have been struck off; it should not be forgotten that the Anomalies Act was solely and entirely a Labour Government measure.

The closeness to starvation which exists among many is indicated by the position during the holiday week. During the past two years, in Bradford alone the 10,000 persons now regularly on public relief are swelled to 12,000 for the holiday week. "Tide week" is a week of "lock-out" because no woollen workers get wages except a few of the specially skilled operatives or overlookers. The better employment has had little effect on the numbers regularly on relief, and the slightest downward fluctuation in trade results in floods of new applicants.

Thus we see that even the "recovery" in woollen textiles shows it to be an industry in which capitalist decay is far advanced. Over a period, its total production goes steadily downward; thousands leaving the industry even in its year of improvement, and those remaining pushed back to pre-war conditions and beyond. Millions need more woollen clothing yet the woollen lords thrive upon a calamity among the sheep, destruction of machinery, and war production! And war for throttled markets is the prospect before them.

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How much nearer to the commonsense of every woollen worker is the situation in the Soviet Union, where the need for more woollen clothing can be met by—more sheep, more machinery, and—peace! Every woollen worker must be made to see that there can be no lasting future before this industry until the workers have taken power as in Russia, and production can be planned for use and not for profit.

The Policy of the Trade Union leadership

Two things are necessary to proceed in that direction; two things which go together. These are: to strengthen the workers' struggle here and now, and to help build the revolutionary party that will lead the struggle forward to workers' power over the capitalists. The woollen workers have an incomparable record of struggle, but of late it has been very ineffectual.

The most recent act of their official organisation was to ask the National Government to apply the Trade Boards Act to the industry; that is, they ask for machinery to be applied which was set up to prevent utter demoralisation in sweated and unorganised industries. Was there ever a more disgraceful confession of bankruptcy than this? The remedy lies with the rank-and-file.

What is the state of the woollen workers' organisation? Of the 188,000 workers previously mentioned, about 55,000 are organised; that is, about 33 per cent. of the adult workers. Of these, about 3,500 are in the woolcombers' union; about 15,000 are in the dozen or so of sectional and craft unions of the overlookers, dressers and twisters, sorters, warehousemen and enginemen. The membership of the National Union of Textile Workers is 37,054 (Bradford district, 8,000; Dewsbury-Batley-Yeadon district, 8,000; Huddersfield district, 12,500).

All the unions except the woolcombers are loosely associated in the N.A.U.T.T. (National Association of Unions in the Textile Trade). This body is little more than a collaboration of union secretaries.

The woolcombers are concentrated especially in Bradford and Shipley. These workers are generally the most vigorous fighters in strikes; they really have a key position because they are concentrated and theirs is the basic process. The employers are well aware of this and non-unionism is enforced more amongst the combers than any other section; and their exhausting conditions leave the combers with little energy for persistent trade union activity. They left the N.A.U.T.T. after the 1930 strike, dissatisfied with the settlement. They lost members, and for a while considered merging with one of the general workers' unions. Recently, however, they have as an independent body, recruited more members.

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The main strength of the sectional and craft unions is in Bradford district, whilst the N.U.T.W. is strongest in Huddersfield and the heavy woollen district of Dewsbury, Batley and Yeadon. The reason for the latter fact is that Bradford is largely specialised in *worsted* manufacture, using in the spinning and weaving sections women and juvenile labour. In the *woollen* manufacture the work is much heavier and male spinners and weavers are as common as female in the Huddersfield and Dewsbury areas.

Thus the question of the organisation of women is particularly important in Bradford, because the employers seize upon the difficult position of the women, and the whole pyramid of woollen workers' conditions is built up with this most numerous and exploited section as its base. The women and girls are militant, but in regular trade union activity they are especially weak. This is because most of them bear double burdens ; work at home after they leave the mill And very many hope that their period of work may be but temporary. The union leaders are for ever prepared to point to this bad organisation, especially of the women, as a reason for inactivity. They aid and abet the employers' splitting policy and the rank-and-file have never been strong enough to defeat them.

The employers' regular tactic has been to leave the Huddersfield and heavy woollen area a step or two behind the remainder in the general application of wage-cuts—usually there is a difference of 5 or 6 per cent.

The last general cut of 11.7 per cent. for example was applied in Bradford after a strike by the woolcombers alone, in July, 1931. Six months later it was applied in Dewsbury-Batley, but only after a stubborn strike. Three months after that a modified cut of 6 per cent. only was enforced in the Huddersfield and Colne Valley area.

In the last two years the employers have made a drive at conditions mill by mill, and more and more chaotic conditions obtain. Resistance flares up from time to time in this mill or that. Thus the weavers of Salts took action against overtime, and there have been lightning strikes of combers against cuts in bonus. The unions usually take no official part except to use the occasions for mechanical recruiting.

The Unions have made application for the agreement and the last cut to be restored. The leaders certainly want an agreement because without it their own positions are insecure. They think the crisis is over and that the employers themselves will require an agreement to reduce the chaotic conditions of competition, which prevent them squeezing the home market to the utmost.

The leaders think they will be conceded an agreement, if the level upon which wages and conditions are stabilised is sufficiently low. So long as they can retain their grip upon the workers they will adapt their

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policy to the situation of the masters. This does not rule out the possibility of their leading strikes when pushed, but only rank-and-file organisation in the branches and mills will ensure that those strikes bring real benefit to the workers.

What can be Done

The rank-and-file workers sense the position—they are not prepared to respond to merely mechanical campaigns for " 100 per cent. unionism." They are not prepared to put their faith merely in the apparatus or the leaders. But if the militant unionists will seek recruits on the basis of an active fight of the branches against the bad conditions in the mills, then the workers can be won into the unions.

Here is the weak spot of the union officials ! They are not prepared to incur the employers' displeasure by encouraging the fight against the bosses in each mill ; although they may maintain a discreet silence whilst some of the lower officials do so.

If the militant unionists who are prepared to follow such a line could be brought together, irrespective of district, craft, mill or sex, they would derive from each other mutual support and encouragement. They could devise the means of bringing the help of many union branches to the first mill involved in a dispute.

A further step would be to thrash out a programme of minimum demands that every woollen worker could support, to be thrown out as a challenge against the demands of dividends. This might contain such items as the restoration of the 11.7 per cent. cut ; minimum wage to defeat the losses from bad material, waiting for warps, &c. ; maximum 48 hour week ; one week's holiday pay ; and decent dining rooms in the mills.

Such a movement would go far to put new life into the unions and branches. It would have to pit itself against the idea of the unions as merely administrators of insurance benefits ; it would have to work for the holding of regular meetings of those branches which at present rarely meet. It would have to set aside dissensions as to the merits of one union or another, and unite on friendly terms all those prepared to resist the attacks of the masters. Thus could it win wide support for militant unionism among the rank-and-file at present unorganised.

Without such a movement, the woollen workers' conditions are likely to continue to deteriorate ; tied to an industry which is declining in a losing battle for its capitalist life.

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STRIKE STRUGGLES IN BIRMINGHAM

Their Lessons on Strike Strategy and Tactics

By SAM SHELTON

(Chairman of Hope's Shop Stewards)

THE eleven weeks' strike against the operation of the Bedaux system at Messrs. Henry Hope and Sons Ltd., Smethwick, in the early part of last year,[1] owes its success to the careful way in which the leaders of the strike studied closely the findings of the Executive of the Red International of Labour Unions (R.I.L.U.), at the Conference held in Strassburg, January, 1929. These strike experiences in the Birmingham district provide us with very valuable material to demonstrate the correctness of the estimation arrived at during this Conference.

Before the resolutions were embodied into pamphlet form and made ready for a wide study among the revolutionary workers, we were faced with a big strike in March of that year at the works of Sir Herbert Austin's motor company, Longbridge, Birmingham, where the men came out on strike (unofficially) against the re-grading system. The strike was supported by the rank and file union men and non-union men against the wishes of the reformist leaders. They developed a strong rank and file Strike Committee with all power to operate independent of the reformist trade union officials whom they claimed had made little or no progress with the men's grievances.

The great weakness of the strike was the absence of a strong revolutionary group who were able to understand the rôle of the reformist leaders, but at the same time it was evidenced that the reformist leaders were unable to get control of the strike by their approaches to the Strike Committee.

An outstanding slogan adopted by the above-mentioned Strassburg Conference was " Do not expect anything from the reformist leaders : *they will betray you* : Prepare for struggle, otherwise you will be defeated."

In the Austin dispute these slogans were not understood by the masses, many of whom were under the influence of the reformist leaders. The reformist leaders who were anxious to get the men back and destroy the power of the rank and file Strike Committee, gave us many valuable

[1]See article for an immediate examination of this strike in the LABOUR MONTHLY, July, 1933, p. 43.

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lessons of how far they are prepared to go in order to wrest the power from the Strike Committee.

The Employers' Federation under the chairmanship of Mr. Ramsay, undertook to show that the men were very ungrateful to the reformist leaders by giving to the press this statement on the strike.

> What has happened, therefore, is that a few extremists in the Works have succeeded in generating a state of feeling, which has caused sections of the employees to denounce the agreement, the Trade Unions and consign the officials to outer darkness.
>
> The Trade Union officials of Birmingham are numerous, they are men with long experience of their jobs, many are engaged in Public services which the employers and the community esteem.

In other words, they were esteemed by the enemies of the working class they were looked upon as a bulwark for Capitalism.

A Comparison of the Strikes at Austin's and Hope's

The Trade Union officials not able to get control of the Strike Committee sought new ways of breaking the strike. Viewing the Easter Holidays as a very favourable time for attack they advertised in the local press to the effect that: "The Unions are of the opinion that work ought to be resumed on Wednesday, 3rd of April so that the negotiations referred to can be commenced immediately."

This was signed by Trade Union officials whom we shall see later on played an important part in the Hope's dispute. These officials wanted to destroy the power of the Rank and File Strike Committee.

This move was very effective and resulted in breaking the strike. In the absence of the chairman of the Strike Committee its vice-chairman, speaking on the first of April, 1929, stated:—

"As Vice-Chairman of the Strike Committee he considered the attitude of the Trade Union officials as one of black treachery and an attempt on their part to take the conduct of the strike out of the hands of the Strike Committee elected by the workers."

The final result of this strike betrayal is that the Austin factory is now regarded as the "Means Test" factory, a factory where militants are suppressed, where no factory leadership exists, and where trade union membership is very low.

The reformist leaders themselves got a very severe lesson, especially the lower officials. Men left the unions, and organisers left their jobs because of the decline in membership.

The Hope's strike later in the year gave the Rank and File an opportunity to draw lessons from Austin strike. The first question addressed to the reformist leaders by the Hope workers was: are you, the Trade Union officials, going to repeat what happened at Austin's. The Rank

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and File were given the assurance that they would never repeat these incidents, many on the ground that it lost them members of the union and thus threatened their living. Only once during the whole of the dispute did the Rank and File receive a threat in the form of an intimation from the representatives of the union officials to the Central Strike Committee that it might happen that if they got instructions they would have to act (meaning that if the higher reformist leaders gave the order then they would have to obey.) Frequently at mass meetings of the men the officials stated that they were prepared to allow the Strike Committee to go ahead and they play a second best.

How did the Trade Union Officials act in the Hope's Strike

The revolutionary workers in the strike at Hope's pursued the policy of recruiting to the Unions; there were no hesitations on this score. But this was done only for the purpose of strengthening the struggle and for knitting the men together for work behind the factory leadership.

The following examples will show how far the Trade Union officials were with the strike.

The representative of the T. & G.W.U. stated that he was down for the purpose of "doing business," meaning recruitment to the Unions. Another representative of the same Union at a meeting of the Strike Committee stated that he had been authorised to "offer from £50 to £100 to the strike providing they got something out of it."

In this way it can be clearly seen that the officials of these Unions were out for membership as the main concern. They actually received over 400 new members. When this was completed they left the rest to the higher officials to act. A special meeting was called for the purpose of considering the "deadlock." They stated that the firm were not prepared to meet the Strike Committee and that *they* would have to act. But the officials received a setback from a meeting of the branch attended by 250 members, to which they reported this, by a resolution calling upon them to meet the Strike Committee with their proposals. So the Rank and File were able to stop what might have been an open attempt to get a break away.

The difference between the Hope's strike and the one at Austin's is very clear. In the first place, the officials of the Unions were smarting under the results of their betrayal in loss of trade union membership, and the great play made by the revolutionary workers of this example inside the reformist unions so that the question was being raised within the Unions very forcibly. Secondly, in the existence of Revolutionary Workers' Movement in the Hope's strike and the acceptance by the workers at Hope's of the line of the R.I.L.U. from the outset. These factors enabled the Rank and File to get more service from the Reformists than otherwise would have been possible.

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Mr. Ramsay, the Chairman of the Employers' Federation, as in the case of the Austin's Strike, stated in a document issued to the homes of the strikers to the effect that: (*a*) only a very small proportion of the workmen were at the outset members of the Trade Unions, and it was understood that the majority were not prepared to trust their case to Trade Union officials; (*b*) The leadership of the strike was immediately placed into the hands of one who was neither an official of one of the Unions nor an employee of the Company. This statement was widely circulated in the press, but it had no effect but to strengthen the fight.

The revolutionary workers for over three months had made preparations and an earlier strike was possible but it would have been premature.

The slogan of "Prepare for Struggle" was very effective and made it possible to win victories.

A factory leadership was maintained. During the dispute a Factory Committee was elected department by department, apart from the Strike Committee. The Union officials claimed that the Factory Committee was unconstitutional that the Union could only recognise Shop Stewards. In order to keep the Factory Committee intact every member was made a Shop Steward. There existed also strong trade union branches forging ahead for great concessions and supporting the factory leadership.

The Material Gains from Hope's

The material gains, as a result of the strike, are as follows:

(*a*) On the paint dips weekly increases of £1 on the night shift; 16s. 6d. for the afternoon shift; and 10s. 6d. for the morning shift.

(*b*) For standard sash workers an increase of 2s. weekly in their basic day rates and an increase of 10 per cent. in piece-work prices.

(*c*) For workers in the tool room a return of the 2s. per week which they were being underpaid and on top of their district rate a bonus of 15 per cent.

(*d*) Millwrights, fitters and their mates received the return of 2s. and in some cases 4s. weekly which they were being paid below the rate. A demand is now going forward for the 15 per cent. for these workers, which the tool room workers have been able to secure.

(*e*) Increases of 25 per cent. in piece rates for the hanger welders and 50 per cent. for the youths that work for them.

(*f*) By the removal of certain classes of work from the hanger conveyor and a little payment of ½d. each for welds which they did not receive formerly, the hangers have been able to increase their earnings by 6d. per hour.

(*g*) Cleaners-off under Bedaux were set the task of cleaning off 13 frames for 1s. 3d. Since the strike they have secured an admittance from the management that 7½ frames for 1s. 3d. is a fair rate of output.

(*h*) Welders on this conveyor now have to do 27 frames for 1s. 3d., whereas under Bedaux they were to do 36 per hour. In addition, they now receive payment for wear and tear of clothes which works out roughly at about 1s. per week.

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Other gains of equal importance achieved relate to the protection of life and limb such as:

> Gloves are now provided free of charge to those workers such as welders, etc., whose jobs make these things necessary. Goggles and respirators are found for those on jobs near the brilliant arc lights and where harmful fumes exist.

All the workers who came out on strike are at work in the factory. This is due to the organised return to work whereby no opportunity was given to keep the militants from the factory. A militant worker who was sacked for alleged bad work was reinstated.

What of the Future?

With these gains every one will see the need for very careful application of the Strassburg decisions on Strike Struggles. The Rank and File are now busy discussing the alternative system to the Bedaux. At the Austin factory the battle has got to be fought over. Eighty per cent. of the men and girls are boiling over with discontent, but the revolutionary leadership in Austin's is still very weak. Yet we are convinced that where revolutionary sections are organised in the factories and the correct trade union policy is applied the workers can win many concessions from their employers. But it is always necessary for us to reiterate the slogan stressed in the Strassburg resolutions:

> "Do not expect anything from the reformist leaders; *they will betray you.* Prepare for struggle, otherwise you will be defeated."

The richness of the strike struggles in Birmingham District are outstanding. In the Lucas strike we, the revolutionary workers, while winning the dispute failed to recruit to the Unions so that what we gained in the strike we have lost since. The same with regard to the Kynoch strike.

The ruling class in our district are alarmed at the successes from independent action, so much so that the police have banned meetings at the big factories, so as to prevent the open attack at the factory gates.

Our task at Hope's is to broaden the fight so as to ensure that the working class feel the benefit of our solidarity, such as to embrace the fight against the Unemployed Bill which dooms many of our fellow workers to the slave camps of capital.

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AMERICAN FARMERS RIDE INTO ACTION

By JOSEPHINE HERBST

[*The* LABOUR MONTHLY *is indebted to the American* NEW MASSES *for permission to reprint the following article which appeared in the issue of that Journal for January 2, 1934.*[1] *At the end of the article as it appeared in the* NEW MASSES *was attached some correspondence between Miss Herbst and the* NEW REPUBLIC *from which it is clear that the latter journal had refused in effect to publish the article, although Miss Herbst had been specifically asked by the* NEW REPUBLIC *to report the Conference. It is clear that the* NEW REPUBLIC *had refused to do this on political grounds —on grounds which amounted to an attempt to decry and to try and ignore the significance of the radical movement amongst the American small and middle farmers which this article so vividly portrays, and also on the grounds that any publicity to, or explanation of, what is one of the chief roots of the militant opposition to Roosevelt and his policy, had no place in the columns of the* NEW REPUBLIC. *The* LABOUR MONTHLY *is glad to have the opportunity of republishing this article as it serves both to expose the real effect of the N.I.R.A. policy on the agricultural front in America as well as to bring out in striking form the standpoint of liberalism all the world over—the* NEW REPUBLIC *is one of America's foremost liberal weeklies—on the present and the future revolutionary struggles of the exploited masses. The article as printed in the* NEW MASSES *was entitled "The Farmers form a United Front." Except for a change to the above in this title no other alteration has been made.*]

SEVEN hundred and two farmers from 36 states representing 58 farm organisations applauded their own program at the Farmers' Second National Conference at Chicago for cash relief, cancellation of debts, against evictions, and other radical measures aimed directly at helping the "busted farmer." Probably most of the delegates present in People's Auditorium, Nov. 15 to 18, had voted for Franklin D. Roosevelt.

A year ago the Farmers First National Conference at Washington rolled up only 238 delegates from 26 states. The chief demands had been for a moratorium and against evictions. After less than a year of the New Deal this group representing the militant farmers of the country,

[1]This is the first issue of the well-known monthly, *New Masses*, in its new guise as a weekly journal. We would like to take the opportunity of welcoming this courageous step of our fellow contemporary. The subscription for foreign readers is $1.25 for 3 months; $2.50 for 6 months; $4.50 for 1 year.

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whether from conservative Grange or militant United Farmers' League, cheered the demand for cancellation and adopted it unanimously.

These farmers have been picketing roads and stopping sheriff sales for a year. In Nebraska they have some forty thousand farmers. Negro croppers in the black belt, 5,000 strong, have so intrenched themselves in one section that sheriffs cannot get white deputies to go in and smash them. Some of the delegates have been in jail, 75 percent of them are in debt, 39 per cent. of them cannot pay their taxes, half of them have participated in sheriff sales or other militant action. Those who are still free from debt are like the farm woman from a Grange in South Dakota who said to me, " We see the future, we are soon going to be in the same boat with the poorest."

In this convention Negro share cropper sits beside poor white farmer. Whether the speaker is John Sumption of South Dakota, dirt farmer of old American stock, militant Snyder of Oregon, Menonite Artemus Stover of Pennsylvania or Negro or white cropper from the south, the story is the same. Drought, grasshoppers, lower than production prices, evictions, and debts have united these different elements into one fighting front.

Armed with government statistics and surveys, these farmers went into a four-day study session. To-day there is no such critter as " *a* farmer." Perhaps he disappeared with rugged individualism. There is rich farmer, middle farmer and poor farmer, the rich and the poor farmer, highly antagonistic and the middle farmer either neutral or rapidly becoming poor. If the farm income for 1933 is a billion dollars more than 1932 the Chicago farmers will tell you it did not filter down to them or the class they represent. Nor did the hundred million paid to the cotton farmers of the south for plowed-under land go to the Negro or white cropper. It went to the landlords and the creditors of the cropper. The rise of prices in July could not help the farmer who had no crop to sell, who had parted with his crop out of necessity earlier to the landlord or scalper. The acreage curtailment plan cannot help the tenant farmer, numbering almost half the total number of farmers. The hog reduction plan has brought no increase to the poor farmer and has appalled him with its waste. The back-to-the-home plan can only mean he must accept peasantry.

" Hunger," says the farmer, " makes a man think." On the floor they joke good humoredly at the city fellow's idea of the dumb farmer, " brother to the ox." But if the type farmer has disappeared, so has the type city fellow. The old blanket antagonism between farm and city is divided. Now the poor farmer sees the bankers, insurance companies, railroads, processors who get the rise in price on the farm products, the milk distributor who gets the spread in milk, and he also sees the city unemployed and poor who are in the same boat with himself.

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This is a new self-conscious type of farmer meeting at Chicago. Talk to him on any subject relating to his condition and he has a confident, militant answer. The New Deal did nothing for him except to make him realise where he stands. The A.A.A.[2] theory of surplus production he ironically twists into surplus-starvation. The blue eagle has been to the poor farmer nothing but a blue buzzard. Perhaps no other class of people is in such a favorable position as the farmer to see the contradiction in the New Deal surplus production plan. The frugal farmer has raised food all his life, he has been drilled by the government on every device to get the most from the soil. Now he is ordered to turn under crops and to destroy hogs. He also knows there are millions unemployed in the cities and many hungry on the farms. Some of these town men came out to help the farmer on the picket lines. In Sioux City they did not spill milk on the roads during the strike but gave it to the unemployed. That the government talks " surplus " under such conditions makes the farmer feel he is living in a world absolutely crazy and that officials are proceeding with straight faces does not restore his confidence.

If the cotton acreage production plan for 1934 is put through it will take 15 million acres out of production. If the tenants who have been raising cotton on this land are dispossessed, 800,000 families will be evicted from their homes. The 20 percent acreage cut proposed in the Corn Belt will not help the tenant farmer when the owner gets the cheque. Croppers' cheques in the south go first to the landlord, who takes his half and then deducts from the balance what the cropper " owes " him. This merely reduces the old debt and gives the cropper nothing for seed or feed. If the landlord leaves anything, town creditors get at what is left before the cropper does. The rise in cotton in July did not benefit the cropper or poor farmer who had long before had his cotton taken from him for " debts."

In a Department of Agriculture survey taken over 6,383 individual farms, the average yearly income per family showed up at $66, not counting interest on mortgages and other debts amounting to $173 a family. The survey covered farms of 233 acres to 50 acres. The average farm in this country is 157 acres and there are 2½ million farms of 49 acres or under. The government plan of acreage reduction contemplates dispossessing two million now on farms.

What will happen to these people ? This conference represents the farmers slated to go. They may be pushed to the back-to-the-home 5 acre plot. If so, this farmer sees himself as a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, not only without hope for education for his children or comforts he feels are his right in a country he has been taught from

[2] This spells out: Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which embodies the agricultural side of N.I.R.A. (The National Industrial Recovery Administration), Roosevelt's New Deal.

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the cradle up to consider the richest in the world, but without a chance to make even a bare living.

It is a platitude now to say the farmers are mad but it is quite to the point to say they are fighting and organizing. The farmers represented here are not relying much upon government legislation but neither are many followers of Milo Reno. This group splits from the Reno crowd in not having any faith in that opportunistic leader who calls and calls off strikes much too arbitrarily to suit the rank and file. This group will not put trust in any leader not picked and guided by the mass of dirt farmers they represent.

The delegation from my locality in Pennsylvania may be taken as a cross section of this conference. Here are four solid Menonite Pennsylvania Germans, a Quaker of pre-revolutionary stock, two naturalized citizens who have " only " been on their farms 25 and 17 years respectively. Most of these farms are superior farms, with fine well kept stone houses, huge barns, machinery and hired help. What moves these men to throw in their lot with the impoverished Negro share cropper from Alabama ?

Nothing except the conviction that their struggle against mass ruin is the same. The farmers in this convention hall represent some 115,000 voting farmers from California to New York and Alabama, but actually they express the situation and belief of a much greater number who are convinced the official policy means to save the well-to-do farmer at the expense of the middle and poor farmer.

If they are demanding cancellation, not moratorium, it is because with a 12 billion dollar debt, larger than that owed us by our allies, they can never hope to pay. Interest charges alone amount to $900,000,000 a year and together with the property tax took one-fourth of the farmer's gross income for 1932. His income of 17 billion dollars in 1919 has dropped to 5 billion dollars in 1932 with a possible six billion in 1933 but with farm prices dropping 6 points between July and September and commodities he must buy, rising 9 points, he sees little advantage.

For the past six years an average of 184,134 farmers a year have been forced out of ownership. Tenancy seems just around the corner for nearly half the farmers who still hold their own farms. In a sample study on farm mortgages made by the Department of Agriculture 36 per cent were delinquent in payment of principal or interest due or both.

This situation has brought the farmers realizing it down to bed rock. Facts are not handled with kid gloves by these farmers from all over the country, some of them taking weeks to get here. Their trucks with slogans *Our First Mortgage is to the Wife and Children, New Dealers Use the Same Old Deck, Farm Surplus Starved Millions,* stand in a parking lot across the street from the auditorium. On the night of a big mass

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meeting in the Coliseum when Chicago workers met with the farmers, a parade eight blocks long packed with singing, yelling farmers scooted through the streets.

During this last year these farmers have thrashed out their troubles in local meetings; through struggles and strikes they have gained in numbers and confidence. On the second day before outlining their demands, they sat back and listened to what the different political parties had to say to them. It was no surprise that the Republican party sent a letter enclosing the Republican platform of 1932 and it brought a good natured laugh. The Democratic reply, written on Mr. Farley's stationery, suggested the convention refer to the Democratic program and to Mr. Wallace. Another and louder laugh. The Socialists sent a speaker, who inspired interest and applause but whose silence on the Negro share cropper and concrete problems of the farmer caused whispering among neighbors near me. If the Communist party representative, Clarence Hathaway, raised cheers it was because his talk was plain and concrete and the farmers are sick of hot air. They are not yet, as a whole, politically minded. But they are not afraid to have visions of a new social order. That auditorium was as spirited a place as I've ever been in, with a kind of contagious belief in the rights of farmers rather than merely needs.

The wording of their demands give the temper and expectation of the farmers. Demand 1 reads:

> We Demand Adequate Immediate Cash Relief for All Needy Farmers in Order to Live and Continue Production:
>
> For all other toiling farmers we demand production credit without collateral and without interest. We demand the distribution of surplus food and crops in storage, in warehouses and on the farms, at the expense of the government, to the destitute farmers and unemployed workers through committees elected by these farmers and workers themselves. We demand free medical aid and dental care for farmers and workers.
>
> We demand that the government guarantee a nine months' term in all public schools, the reopening of closed schools, no further closing of schools, free text-books, free transportation, no overcrowding in schools, the building of new schools, no discrimination because of race or nationality, and free hot lunches not at the expense of the teacher.
>
> Where local funds are insufficient these demands are to be met at the expense of the government.
>
> We demand further free education with all expenses paid, through grade school, high school, and any college desired.

There are six other demands for cancellation of debts, against foreclosures and evictions, for higher purchasing power, tax relief, reduction in rents, and a complete cancellation of all Negro share cropper debts and abolition of terror against him. Higher prices are not to be gained by raising prices to the consumer, but by cutting the profits of the middleman. They know they need buyers and that the workers need work

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but they are not so sure this system of society can give either. But it would be a mistake to imply that their eyes are not on the immediate future. Their program may sound ambitious but these farmers are not going to accept a bare subsistence without a struggle.

Forty-two women delegates met in a separate session backing up the men and coming out with a program for birth control and education. Youth groups and the Negro delegation added fire to a convention astonishing to anyone who knew this same class of farmer a few years ago. The migratory worker, forgotten since the I.W.W. was present with 31 delegates and a program of action. If ever a group gave the impression of knowing what it wants and how it means to get it, the Second Farmers National Conference is that group.

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MARX AND ENGELS ON THE BRITISH WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT—IV.

1879—1895

HERE, despite all this, that, and the other, there is still practically nothing doing. It is impossible even to say that there exists a Socialist sect, as in the time of Owen. As many sects as there are heads. The Social Democratic Federation has at any rate a programme and a certain discipline, but it has absolutely no support among the masses. The leaders are adventurers of the most careerist type and their paper *Justice* is one solid colossal lie about the world historic power and significance of the Federation. At times even good Ede[1] forgets this and by his untimely quotations from the paper does the *genuine* movement in England more harm than he can make good; where he is (in Germany) he can hardly realise how *Justice* exploits this here. The League is passing through a crisis. Morris, a pure sentimental dreamer, the personification of "the good will" (of Kant. H.C.S.), who seems so good to himself that he becomes the evil will to learn nothing whatever, has fallen headlong over the phrase revolution and become a victim of the anarchists. Bax is very talented and understands something—but after the fashion of philosophers has concocted his own form of socialism which he takes for the true Marxist theory and does a lot of damage with it. However, this is an infantile disease in his case and will pass, it is only a pity that this process is being gone through in public. Aveling is forced to work so hard for his daily bread that he also is not able to do much studying; he is the only one I meet regularly. But the appearance of *Capital* in English[2] will clear their minds to an enormous extent.—*Engels to Bebel*, August 18, 1886.

The movement here is still in the hands of adventurers on the one hand, and cranks and Socialists by sentiment on the other, whilst the masses still stand aside, although among them the beginning of a movement is also noticeable. But it will be some time before the masses begin to move. That is all to the good, for it will give the movement time to develop good leaders.—*Engels to Sorge*, September 17, 1886.

[1] Edouard Bernstein.

[2] The Moore and Aveling translation of *Capital*, Vol. I., was published in 1886.

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Here with us, the absence of any competition, on one hand, and the stupidity of the government, on the other, have allowed the gentlemen of the S.D.F. to secure a position, such as they could not have dared to dream of three months ago. The alarm caused by the plan (not seriously intended) to hold a procession behind the Lord Mayor's Show on November 9, and afterwards the same alarm on account of the Trafalgar Square meeting of November 21, when there was a question of calling out the artillery, and the Government finally nipped the whole thing in the bud, forced the S.D.F. gentry to call for the 21st a quite ordinary meeting without rhodomontade or pseudo-revolutionary demonstrations with obligatory mob accompaniment, and the Philistines immediately developed a respect for these people who had made so much commotion, yet had behaved quite decently in the end. As apart from the S.D.F. no one takes an interest in the unemployed who, owing to the chronic slump each winter, become a stronger mass, suffering severe want, and are a force to be reckoned with, the S.D.F. has won the game. The labour movement is beginning here, and no mistake, and if the S.D.F. is now reaping a harvest, it is due to the cowardice of the radicals and the stupidity of the Socialist League which has embarked on a dogfight with the anarchists, and has no time to take an interest in the living movement going on under its very nose. Besides, it is difficult to say how long Hyndman and Co. will stick to their present relatively rational tactic. I expect that very soon they will again be committing colossal blunders, as they are in a violent hurry. And then they will become convinced that one cannot behave like this in a serious movement.—*Engels to Sorge*, November 29, 1886.

Here, the unemployed agitation of the Social Democratic Federation has come to an end without any results. The church parade in St. Paul's Cathedral,[3] which was a feeble imitation of the Chartists, was just as barren of results. In short, there is nothing doing here just now. Maybe things will go better in the autumn, and it is to be hoped that before then the people at the head of the Social Democratic Federation will be played out and no longer on the scene.—*Engels to Sorge*, March 10, 1887.

[3]The S.D.F. organised a demonstration, with processions from various points in London, to converge on St. Paul's Cathedral for the afternoon service on Sunday, 27th February, 1887. The proposal was to call upon the Christian leaders to declare themselves unequivocally on the side of the unemployed. All reports agree that the cathedral was crowded, but apart from *Justice* it appears to have been the general opinion that the Cathedral was filled with far more sightseers than socialists or unemployed. A large number of demonstrators were unable to secure admission owing to the crowded state of the Cathedral, and for them a service was held outside, during or after which John Burns attempted to sing a hymn with words suited to the occasion. There was some disturbance and interruption inside the Cathedral during the service, and the demonstrators afterwards held meetings at various points on the Embankment.

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Aveling's campaign among the Radical Clubs of the East End is going well. The American elections' relative successes now again in Chicago and Cincinnati[4] are helping him greatly. John Bull does not want to see himself outflown by them, and it is the only foreign influence that has made itself felt here. The day after to-morrow at a big Coercion meeting in Hyde Park[5] Aveling will speak from two, and Tussy from one, of the fifteen platforms. It promises to be one of those great meetings by means of which the London worker shows that there has been a turning-point in English politics. For that matter the German elections[6] have not been without effect here.—*Engels to Sorge*, April 9, 1887.

Hyndman's correspondence in the *Standard*[7] is deplorable. He wants to come out openly on Henry George's side, whereas the latter is getting more and more entangled in his agrarian bog and so must suppress socialistic elements. Here, too, his (Hyndman's, H.C.S.) affairs are in a bad way. These sensational methods are exhausted, and new ones are not to be found every day. And yet without them Hyndman cannot maintain his rôle. On the other hand, the Avelings have begun a very energetic agitation in the East End radical clubs, with special attention to the American example of an independent Labour Party. Things are going well. If everything moves so fast in America as at present, it will cost the Liberals the whole of the East End of London in a year.

A crisis is gradually developing in the Socialist League also. A delegate conference is to be held at Whitsun, and then it is to be hoped that the struggle with the anarchist elements who have managed to get into the League and have Morris's support will be definitely settled. —*Engels to Sorge*, April 23, 1887.

Aveling is carrying on a very successful agitation in the East End of London. The American example has made an impression. The radical

[4]Mayoral elections were held at Cincinnati and Chicago in April, 1887. At Cincinnati the candidate of the United Labour Party nearly succeeded in topping the poll, the figures being: Smith (Republican) 17,963, Watson (Democrat) 11,951, Stevenson (United Labour Party) 17,367. At the first count Stevenson was declared elected, and strong charges of corrupt practices were made when the recount declared Smith elected. At Chicago, in the straight fight between a Republican and a United Labour candidate, the former received 51,089 and Nelson for United Labour received 22,848 votes. Actually, at the time this vote was regarded as not up to expectations.

[5]A meeting was held in Hyde Park on Easter Monday, April 11th, 1887, to protest against the Irish Crimes Bill, the infamous "Coercion Bill" at that time being passed through the House of Commons.

[6]In the April, 1887, elections to the Reichstag, the Social Democratic representation fell from 24 to 11 members, but the total number of votes cast for Social Democratic candidates rose from 549,936 to 774,128.

[7]Henry George started the *Standard*, in New York, as a weekly newspaper at the beginning of January, 1887. Hyndman had an article on "England's Democracy" in the issue for April 9th, 1887.

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clubs, to which the Liberals owe the twelve seats they hold out of the 69 in London, have approached him with the proposal to lecture to them on the American movement, and he and Tussy are very busy in the work. It is now an immediate question of organising an English Labour Party with an independent class programme. If it is successful, it will relegate to a back seat both the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League, and that would be the most satisfactory end to the present squabbles. Hyndman himself sees that his affairs are in a bad way, especially as he has quarrelled with almost all his comrades. So he has now raked up the accusation of the Executive Committee[8] against Aveling,[9] in order to publish it in *Justice*. That is very good, for it will at least stop the slander behind Aveling's back and will enable him to deal with it in public. At Whitsun the position of the Socialist League will be made clear also. Either the anarchists will have to clear out, or we must drop the whole sack of rubbish. The Avelings are now doing more than all the others, and their activities are much more fruitful. —*Engels to Sorge*, May 4, 1887.

No movement absorbs so much fruitless labour as one which has not yet emerged from the status of a sect. You know that just as well as I. At such times everything turns to scandalmongering. And so once more my letter is about English affairs.

The Sunday before last saw the conference of the Socialist League. The anarchist element, which had been allowed to get into it, and is supported by Morris (who hates everything Parliamentary like poison, is hopelessly muddle-headed, and as a poet is above science), have won. A resolution, seemingly innocuous, to the effect that *to-day* there can be no talk of Parliamentary action, was passed by 17 votes to 11 (see Commonweal, June 4), of which one was that of an *ad hoc* reconstituted bogus branch (three men, their three wives, and Frau Schack) and three London delegates with mandates from the provinces, who however violated their pledge to vote against any kind of abstention resolution. Therefore, three stolen votes and one invalid.

[8]The Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour Party.

[9]Aveling, with his wife Eleanor Marx Aveling, had made a tour in the United States at the request of the Socialist Labour Party. At the end of the tour some difference arose between Aveling and the Executive Committee as to payment of a fair share of his expenses, as the result of which Aveling refused to accept any payment. The Executive Committee afterwards charged Aveling with "extravagant living," circulating the charges among the Socialist Parties and journals of Europe. *Justice* published the charges in the issue for April 30th, 1887, and Aveling replied in the issue for May 14th. In a letter to Mrs. Wischnewetzky, dated February 9th, 1887, Engels points out that as Eleanor Marx accompanied Aveling, a charge against him becomes necessarily a charge against her. But to accuse the daughter of Marx, whom moreover Engels had known almost all her life, of "cheating the Socialist movement" was absurd, and demonstrated the baselessness of the charge. In *To-day* for May, 1887, the editor, Hubert Bland, also dealt with the charges favourably to Aveling, pointing out that at the bottom of it all was a difference of policy, as Aveling had advocated a line of action which the Executive Committee had disliked.

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But in reality, the decisive circumstance was Morris's threat to leave the League if any kind of parliamentary struggle be recognised in principle. And as Morris covers the weekly £4 deficit of the Commonweal, that outweighed all else by far.

Our people now want to organise the provinces, and after three or four months to call an extraordinary congress to overthrow the decision. That would be a failure. In the manufacture of voting sections the anarchists are far better than our people, and can make seven men into eight voting sections. But the comedy has its good aspects, and with the presence of the workers in the League it is not to be ignored. Naturally, Bax is with us, and from the workers, Donald, Binning, Mason and others—the best. None of our people stood for election to the Executive Council. Besides, they would probably be thrown out by the anarchists, which would be the best thing that could happen.

From which it follows that our people, in face of the imminent outbreak of a bona fide labour movement, are not tied to an organisation which claims to lead the whole movement, *à la* Executive Committee in New York and the Social Democratic Federation here. In the provinces the workers are everywhere organising local Leagues (socialist). They have a colossal contempt for anything coming from London. —*Engels to Sorge*, June 4, 1887.

In *To-day*[10] for August which I am sending you you will find some remarks about Aveling's circular that are not altogether without foundation. The youngster has brought it all on himself through his complete ignorance of life, people, and business, and through his weakness for poetic dreaming. But I have given him a good shaking up, and Tussy will do the rest. He is very gifted and useful, and thoroughly honest, but as gushing as a boy, and always inclined to some absurdity. Well, I still remember the time when I was just such a noodle.—*Engels to Sorge*, August 8, 1887.

The Trades Union Congress[11] here has once more shown that the revolution develops within the shell of the old. The Congress adopted

[10]See Note 9.

[11]The Swansea Congress of the Trades Union Congress, held in September, 1887, passed a resolution declaring: "That, having regard to the very valuable services rendered to the cause of Labour by its few representatives in the House of Commons . . . . this Congress hereby strongly urges upon the workmen of this country the imperative necessity of forming labour electoral associations in all the large centres of industry, with the view of returning to Parliament, town councils, school boards, and other representative bodies, workmen who shall be able to speak with authority upon all questions affecting the working classes." During the debate there was a scene between Keir Hardie (present for the first time at a congress) and Henry Broadhurst, M.P., over the issue of Broadhurst's (and other labour leaders) support to anti-working class candidates in Parliamentary elections.

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a resolution to organise a separate Labour Party, and that against the wishes of the leaders, especially Broadhurst and the other Labour M.P.s. —*Engels to Sorge*, September 16, 1887.

Here things are moving slowly but surely. The various little organisations have found their level and are now willing to co-operate without bickering. The police brutalities in Trafalgar Square have worked miracles in helping to widen the gap between the working-men Radicals and the middle-class Liberals and Radicals: the latter have behaved in a cowardly fashion both in and out of Parliament. The Law and Liberty League[12]—a body gaining ground every day—is the first organisation in which Socialist delegates as such are seated at the side of Radical delegates. The stupidity of the present Tory government is appalling, and if old Disraeli were alive he would box their ears right and left. But this stupidity is helping on matters wonderfully. Home Rule for Ireland, and for London, is now the cry here, the latter something which the Liberals fear even more than do the Tories. The working-class element is getting more and more exasperated by the silly Tory provocation, and is growing daily more conscious of its strength at the ballot box and more permeated by the Socialist leaven. The American example has opened their eyes, and if next autumn there were to be a repetition in any large town of the New York election campaign of 1886 it would have an instantaneous effect here. The two great Anglo-Saxon nations are bound to start a competition in Socialism as well as in other matters, and then it will be a race run at continually increasing velocity.—*Engels to Mrs. Wischnewetzky.*[13] February 22, 1888.

[12]The Law and Liberty League came into existence in consequence of the events of "Bloody Sunday," November 13th, 1887, when the police savagely broke up a demonstration in Trafalgar Square which was held to protest against the prison treatment of certain political prisoners. It was a federal committee composed of representatives of the Social Democratic Federation, the Fabian Society, the Socialist League, Clubs affiliated to the Metropolitan Radical Federation and some other socialist clubs. Its object was to provide assistance legal, financial and moral to "all unjustly assailed by the police." It took over the functions of the Socialist Defence Committee which was formed in the same year, 1887 (arising out of constant collisions between the Socialists and police in the years 1885 to 1887) primarily in order to provide the exhorbitant bail demanded by the police of those arrested in the fight for free speech. During the subsequent fortnight after "Bloody Sunday," the Square was virtually garrisoned by the police, and following one of the baton charges, a worker, Linnell by name, died. In addition to providing legal defence and finding bail and relieving the families of those arrested the League organised a huge funeral procession attended by 120,000 in honour of Linnell. Eventually the agitation set going by the League forced the removal of the Commissioner of Police, Sir C. Warren, and a complete modification of police tactics. Among those who supported the League or took part in its work were Eleanor Marx, Annie Besant, W. M. Thomson (editor of *Reynolds'*) as its chief barrister, W. T. Stead (of the *Pall Mall Gazette*), Belfort Bax, Stewart Headlam, R. B. Cunningham-Graham, Herbert Burrows, William Morris, Frank Smith, Robert Dowling and J. Seddon.

[13]Wischnewetzky, Florence Kelley (1859-1932) translator of Engels' "Condition of the Working Class" into English.

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I am boycotted here almost as much as you are in New York. The various Socialist cliques here are dissatisfied at my complete neutrality in regard to them, and being all of them agreed on that one point, try to get even with me by not mentioning any of my writings. Neither *Our Corner*[14] (Mrs. Besant) nor *To-day*, nor the *Christian Socialist*, a Socialist monthly journal edited by Mrs. Besant (but I am not quite certain of this last), has mentioned the "Condition of the Working Class," although I sent them copies myself. I fully expected this, but did not like to tell you so until I had proof. I don't blame them, because I have seriously offended them by saying that as yet there is no real working-class movement here, and that, as soon as it does come, all the great men and women who are now so busy as officers of an army without soldiers will find their right level, and a rather lower one than they expect. But if they think their pinpricks can pierce my old, well-tanned and pachydermatous hide, they are mistaken.—*Engels to Mrs. Wischnewetzky*, May 2, 1888.

[14]("Our Corner.")

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE YOUTH IN TWO WORLDS

Youth in Soviet Russia. Klaus Mehnert. (Allen & Unwin.) 7s. 6d.
Juvenile Unemployment. J. Jewkes and A. Winterbottom. (Allen & Unwin.) 5s.

AS the first comprehensive book to appear in English on this subject, it is strangely enough by a self-confessed Fascist who qualifies himself to write because he was born in Russia (a German) and has visited the Soviet Union on four recent occasions, during which visits he lived and moved amongst Russia's youth.

If for the first part the author has crystalised his experiences into an intimate account, including some very useful facts and figures, it is not long before he introduces his Fascist pretensions when his reasons for writing the book become clear. He tells us how much he was impressed by the mass liberation of energy and initiative of the Soviet youth and their whole-hearted participation in the general work of completing the First Five-Year Plan; and these undeniable results of the successes of the Soviet Government's policy toward the youth he sets forth as an example to his "own" country, wherein he calls for a resuscitation of the German nation with the "best of all classes," using the mobilisation of German youth as the strategic weapon. Ignoring the historical development of the Russian Revolution, he assumes it as having been a sudden national revival (ignoring also its international character as a unity of several nations) taking the peculiar form of the proletarian dictatorship, and uses this falsity as a justification for his own Fascist "revival." The book is an obvious attempt to exploit the benefits of workers' rule, achievable only through the zeal and self-sacrifice of millions of people consciously striving towards a classless society, as propaganda for a Fascist bolstering up of capitalism in Germany.

"I am neither for nor against Bolshevism," he says, nevertheless owing to the "different conditions" that "call for different treatment," he is for a "European solution."

Some idea of the "special conditions" is given in *Juvenile Unemployment*, a sectional picture of the uninterrupted decline of capitalism as it affects young workers, particularly in Lancashire, "where unemployment is serious." After dwelling upon the appalling state of affairs wherein for youth 14–18 "are years of sporadic employment, often in blind alley occupations . . . of wearying and deadening idleness," the authors suggest that the task of British Capitalism is twofold: to "cunningly train its young people . . . teach the principle of the essence of efficiency in a competitive world." But "this way will not be easy . . . there is only one alternative in a capitalistic society; that is for the level of wages and the standard of living in this country to fall." "Wages in Lancashire must fall towards the level of those in Japan." Other than vague references to "reorganisation," "voluntary efforts," "determined efforts," &c., the only prospect offered youth is their training under the title of "efficiency" to displace adult workers. And Mr. Mehnert wants to "do away with hunger and want and bring back faith in the future" without disturbing capitalism.

The heritage of working youth under capitalism has always been exploitation, hunger and war. The heritage of Socialism is prosperity and progress

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through harmonious co-operation and collective effort in a society rid of exploitation. That is the only way out for all workers, Russian or otherwise, achievable only by the forcible overthrow of the capitalist system. The European solution is the Soviet solution.

Mr. Mehnert's black philosophy in a red wrapping is no proof for the bourgeoisie against the inevitability of the " Moscow Road."

A. J. W.

DICTATORSHIP AND THE COMMUNE

The Civil War in France. Karl Marx. (Martin Lawrence. 2s. 6d.)

"OF late the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." How well these words of Engels, which occur in his introduction to Marx's Address on " The Civil War in France," might have been uttered for the benefit of our modern Labour Party philistines, who in the very epoch when the workers' dictatorship has become an historic necessity, when the bourgeoisie themselves are using " democracy " merely to usher in constitutionally the open and bloody form of their dictatorship, can find nothing better than repeat liberal platitudes about democracy and " constitutional " methods! For us to-day, the chief interest of the Paris Commune—" that Sphinx so tantalising to the bourgeois mind "—lies not so much in the lessons it gives of the form of State power to be adopted by the workers (for this experience has been immeasurably enriched and brought up to date by the Russian, German, and Chinese revolutions), as in its clear warning of the results of bad leadership, and of mistaken magnanimity of the proletariat towards its class enemy.

In a sense it may almost be said that the Commune had no leadership. Certainly there was no party directing the revolutionary forces like the Communist Party in modern times. The Commune was, as Lenin remarked, " a brilliant example of the capacity of the proletariat to unite for the realisation of democratic tasks to which the bourgeoisie could only pay lip service." But it stopped half-way. The division of the proletariat into different sects, and the prevalence of petty-bourgeois ideas, prevented a bold policy of " expropriating the expropriators," and allowed the dark forces of reaction at Versailles to intrigue with Bismarck until they were strong enough to crush the young Socialist Republic.

This aspect of the experience of the Commune is very important for us in Britain to-day, since some comrades in their justified enthusiasm for the united front of struggle tend to overlook the importance of the unified leadership provided by a single revolutionary party. Like all subsequent revolutions the Paris Commune showed that without such leadership there can be no firm dictatorship of the proletariat, no safeguard against the bloody agonies of counter revolution. It must therefore be the chief aim of us all to work to build such a revolutionary Party, so that when the revolutionary situation ripens we shall be prepared to utilise it, and proceed forward boldly, without hesitation, in our Socialist tasks. Let the memory of the tragic fate that overwhelmed the Commune spur us onward in this task!

D.G.

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Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 7 John Street, W.C.1, and Printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 99 Church Gate, Leicester

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